

# DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

July 1990, \$1.95 U.K. £2.25

**LYLE  
LOVETT**

**STAN  
GETZ**

**RALPH  
PETERSON**

**JOHN  
MAYALL**

**4TH  
ANNUAL  
MUSICFEST  
U.S.A.**



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Lyle Lovett



Stan Getz



Ralph Peterson



John Mayall

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# EVEN COWBOYS SWING THE BLUES

By Bill Milkowski

# LYLE LOVETT

**F**our years ago, things were much clearer. Radio programmers, scribes, and the record-buying public had no problem putting Lyle Lovett into a neat little pigeonhole. "File that boy under country with a capital C." After all, he was from Texas, he sung about wanting to rope on the prairie and ride on the plains. He sung about longing to wear a 40-gallon Stetson hat. And there were plenty of weeping steel guitars and fiddles supporting his cryptic prose.

And yet, there was something very different about this boy from Klein, Texas. He wasn't cut from the same cloth as such squeaky-clean, all-American country pinup boys as Randy Travis and Ricky Van Shelton. For one thing, he didn't wear a cowboy hat. And then there was the matter of his hair. It was tall hair. Stair hair. The kind of 'do that you'd more likely see in the East Village of New York, not Texas. And never Nashville. Yup, there was definitely something different about this Lovett guy. While he had one foot firmly planted in the "good ol' boy" country tradition, some of his prose was downright subversive. Vulnerable and sensitive, even; like the semi-autobiographical "The Waltzing Fool," about a shy boy who has lights in his fingers but keeps his hands in his pockets, perhaps describing how Lyle may have suppressed his own natural gift as a kid. This is definitely not the kind of stuff that rugged cowboys are made of.

*Lyle Lovett* came out in 1986 and charmed the pants off of country radio programmers. They jumped on tunes like "Cowboy Man" and "Farther Down The Line." And they put "God Will" into high rotation. That biting, kiss-off anthem contains the vengeful lines: "And who keeps on loving you, when you've been lying/Who keeps on trusting you, when you've been cheating/God



does but I don't/God will but I won't/And that's the difference between God and me." *Rolling Stone* responded enthusiastically by calling "God Will" the best country song of the past five years. *Spin* went even further out on a limb, calling it the best country song written in the past decade. So clearly, Lyle Lovett was country, right?

Well, yes and no. Even on that rousing country debut there were hints that Lyle had other things on his mind besides pleasing the Nashville brass. Take the tune "An Acceptable Level Of Ecstasy (The Wedding Song)." Besides the surreal scenario—a posh party paid for by the funeral director, who poisoned the saxophone section—there was an undercurrent of jazz in Matthew McKenzie's walking bass and Billy Williams big-band horn arrangements, hinting at things to come.

On his 1987 followup, *Pontiac*, the enigmatic songwriter headed even further into Tom Waits-Randy Newman territory with his sardonic observations on rocky relationships and revenge. His sprightly "L.A. County" is a little ditty about a spurned man who hunts down his ex-sweetheart and her husband-to-be on their wedding day and blows them away on the altar. The title cut of that album is a dark and despairing lament ending on an unresolved note. And tunes like "She's No Lady" and "She's Hot To Go," a jump-jive number done up in the Dan Hicks tradition, had feminist-conscious critics crying "misogynist."

An odd album by Nashville standards, *Pontiac* still had something for country radio programmers to grab onto. Like the playful "Give Me Back My Heart," a rousing country number with rolling piano by Matt Rollings, slick dobro licks by Ray Herndon, cool pedal-steel playing by Paul Franklin, a Bob Willsian "A-ha" and the downhome refrain: "Give back my heart, chip-kicker redneck woman/Take your boots and walk out of my life." Or there was "I Loved You Yesterday," a melancholy c&w lament with crying steel guitar. Or "Walk Through The Bottomland," a duet with Emmylou Harris.

But the jazzy yearnings were bubbling closer to the surface on this one. "She's No Lady" has a walking bass, supple brushwork by Harry Stinson, bluesy piano by Rollings, more big-band horn arrangements, and a jazzy soprano solo by Steve Marsh. More big-band arrangements on "Black And Blue," featuring cool alto embellishments by Marsh.

Then last year came *Lyle Lovett And His Large Band*. Now everyone's confused. The split in Lovett's schizophrenic nature is an even 50-50 on this one. Side one is jazz, blues, and jump music, opening with a swinging rendition of Clifford Brown's "The Blues Walk" and continuing on with Ray Charles-inspired big band blues numbers, sparked by Francine Reed's gospel-fervor background vocals and Ray Herndon's Charlie Christian-inspired guitar licks. On side two, Lyle brings in the steel guitar and fiddle and plays by Nashville's rules. "I Married Her Just Because She Looks Like You" is the definitive country lament. "Which Way Does That Old Pony Run" is strictly in the tradition, as is "If You Were To Wake Up." And to put aside any further questions about Lyle's allegiance to c&w, he throws in the Tammy Wynette classic, "Stand By Your Man," which sounds more like a plea than a bit of cautionary advice coming from a man.

And what are we to make of the bluesy "Here I Am" from side one, with such cryptic lines as, "If Ford is to Chevrolet/What Dodge is to Chrysler/What Corn Flakes are to Post Toasties/What the clear blue sky is to the deep blue sea/What Hank Williams is to Neil Armstrong/Can you doubt that we were made for each other?"

**C**lever guy. No wonder the scribes like him. They appreciate a good, sardonic wit. But Lyle Lovett is by no means an underground cult figure on the level of a Townes Van Zandt or Guy Clark, fellow Texan songwriters who served as Lovett's role models in the early years. Fact is, people like him. Maybe it's his haircut. Maybe it's the infectious energy of his Large Band, a hot concert attraction this summer. Perhaps it's all the recent media exposure—stories in *Rolling Stone* and *People* magazine along with TV appearances on the Grammy Awards show and

NBC's *Night Music* (in which he sang a duet with Fontella Bass on her 1963 hit, "Don't Mess Up A Good Thing").

Whatever it is, don't ask Lyle. He doesn't have a clue.

"I'm not quite sure how I'm perceived by people," he says in soft tones that bear no stamp of a Texas twang whatsoever. "It's hard to figure. But judging from the crowds that come to our shows, it doesn't seem to be a real traditional country audience."

Lovett first went out on tour with the Large Band in March of 1988. Prior to that it was "just kind of going out however I could afford to, which a lot of times meant just a duo with John Hagen, the cello player in the band."

Cello? In a country band?

As Lyle puts it, "There's always room for cello."

**"The idea of using the big band more as punctuation than as an overall ambitious arrangement is basically the idea we modeled the Large Band after."**

In the early years, before certain subversive elements began creeping into his music and stage show, country fans embraced Lyle Lovett. But as his hair began growing to lofty heights and he began pulling out Clifford Brown tunes to open his show, stone country fans began turning their backs on him. "The first record was well supported by country radio," he recalls. "I had one single that made it to #10 and had three others that reached the Top 20. The last two have been less supported by country radio. I'm really not sure why."

My guess is that folks in Nashville don't cotton to no tales about funeral parlor directors moonlighting as caterers and poisoning partygoers to bring in new business. That's pretty warped, even by Randy Newman standards. And I'd guess that TV's *Hee Haw* crowd is not exactly comfortable with the swing factor. Too many socio-political implications there.

"Damn it boy! Why can't you just play some nice songs, good wholesome American songs, like that boy Randy Travis?"

By emulating such renegades as Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt, as well as Tom Waits and Randy Newman and John Prine, it wasn't likely that Lyle Lovett would ever be accepted into the golden inner circle of Nashville, alongside such straitlaced role models as Travis, Van Shelton, Ricky Skaggs, and other new traditionalists who have picked up on 60 years of Grand Old Opry conservatism. Lyle may have one foot in that door but he's destined to remain on the fringe, along with other new country mavericks like Steve Earle and k.d. lang.

As he sees it, "A few years ago, in the mid-'80s, country seemed to be going through an experimental time. That's when Dwight Yokam and Steve Earle were signed. And other acts like Nancy Griffith, K.T. Oslin, and k.d. lang that were sort of less than traditional country were suddenly getting deals. And now, the pendulum seems to have swung back the other way. After that wave of experimental stuff, it seems like the most traditional acts like Randy Travis and Ricky Van Shelton are really the most successful. So things seem to be very conservative in country music right now. I think that period in country music where things opened up a bit gave someone like me a chance. But I don't see that what I'm doing now is having an impact on country music."

Then how does he account for the fact that *Lyle Lovett*, which got the most airplay on country radio, sold less than the subsequent two albums? "Good question. My second record sold three times as many units as the first one. And the third one is selling even better. So it's strange how it works. The radio helps me get exposure but doesn't necessarily sell records for me. So really, if I had been more successful at radio on the second record, I may have been more locked into having to do one kind of thing. I'd have to be more aware of country radio. But I'm really not conscious of marketing when I write these songs. I just write them and then I fit the arrangements to the tunes. It might call for a country arrangement or it might call for some bluesy arrangement or some swing thing. I can never tell until after the narrative is finished."

**G**rowing up in the small farming community of Klein, just outside Houston, Lyle was exposed to the usual doses of country music in the form of Hank Williams, Willie Nelson, and others. His parents were big Nat King Cole fans and Lyle listened with interest to their records of the great King Cole trio sessions. He was aware of the music of Bob Wills and Gatemouth Brown, both of whom incorporated the swing factor into their country-blues stylings, but was more influenced by Ray Charles.

"I was especially knocked out by the stuff Ray was doing for Atlantic back in the '50s. Records like *The Genius Of Ray Charles*, *The Great Ray Charles*, and *The Genius After Hours*, an all-instrumental album, really made a big impression on me. That idea of using the big band more as punctuation than as an overall ambitious arrangement is basically the idea we modeled the Large Band after. I never wanted to do a full-blown, big-band thing with intricate horn arrangements. I just wanted to have the saxophones add a dynamic that could help to draw people in and provide some interest. I felt that was important given the kind of songs I was writing. In the past when I played solo and just sang the tunes with a guitar and with John accompanying me on cello, people really had to listen to what was going on in the lyrics to like what I was doing. And if they liked me it was because of the words in my songs or the point of view.

"Now, with the Large Band there's another point of entry into the music. Going out on the first tour back in '88 was really fun for me. It was a first for me to have people respond to just the feel of the music rather than to the actual content of the lyrics. All of a sudden it opened up all these possibilities to bring in more people. I mean, I was always playing places where I didn't have to worry about keeping people dancing, which is a tremendous pressure if you're basically a folk singer. And now occasionally we have people jumping up on stage kind of impromptu and dancing. It's definitely new for me."

While attending Texas A&M as a journalism student, Lovett began writing songs and playing coffeehouses. He graduated in 1980 and went back for a graduate degree in German. His studies involved some travel in Europe and on one trip he met up with a colorful country & western promoter who went by the name of Buffalo Wayne. "He named himself after his two favorite American cowboys, Buffalo Bill and John Wayne . . . a European perception of what somebody from Texas would be like."

In 1983, Buffalo Wayne invited Lyle to perform at a country festival in Luxembourg. At the month-long celebration of native American culture, Lyle hooked up with what would become the nucleus of his Large Band. "I was on the bill with two other bands, basically booked to play during the set changes between the two. And this was not a real concert-oriented thing. The bands were sort of background entertainment for people who were drinking beer and pretending they were cowboys. And I was really getting lost in the shuffle, being a solo acoustic act. I was having a tough time. I was actually thinking about going back home because nobody would've even noticed if I did. But what happened was these guys from Phoenix called J. David Sloan and The Rogues saw that I was having a tough time. They took pity on me, learned some of my songs, and invited me up to play with them during their set. And that worked out really well. We hit it off good."

That band included pianist Matt Rollings, who was 18 at the time (see "Reviews" DB June '90). The next

summer, Lyle went to Phoenix with a batch of original tunes and sought out The Rogues with the intention of recording a demo. While working there in the studio, Rollings introduced him to a dynamic singer who was working the local club circuit. "Matt was playing on the side with Francine Reed. He took me down to see her and I was really knocked out. Steve Marsh was also in her band at the time. So that, along with guitarist Ray Herndon and bassist Matt McKenzie, became the nucleus of the band that appears on the first album and the next two."

Lovett's demo tape found its way to singer-songwriter Guy Clark, who recommended it highly to Tony Brown, a Nashville industry heavyweight at MCA Records. The collection of offbeat country and blues songs registered with MCA brass and now they've got an honest-to-goodness, genre-bending renegade on their hands.

A hip presence with a sly persona (Rosanne Cash called him "too hip for vinyl"), Lyle Lovett is making it safe for city folk to like country music. He gives it to you in small doses and sandwiches it between swing and jump blues. And he shrouds it in cryptic lyrics that keep fans guessing, critics drooling, feminists railing. He's one sharp smart aleck, this Lyle Lovett.

"It might be true that I'm turning some people on to country music for the first time . . . people who come to see my show and maybe hear me do something like 'Give Back My Heart' or 'Walk Through The Bottomland' or 'Stand By Your Man' [which he saves up for a triumphant encore in concert]. But I think when they go and listen to somebody who is really country music, they'll see the difference. To call me country might be misleading them a little bit."

Call him clever but don't call him country. And call him fun. Lyle Lovett is giving the listener plenty of food for thought, but beneath the smirking, acerbic persona, he just wants to let the good times roll. He plans to capture that live concert energy this August at the final performance of his summer tour. That gig at The Paramount Theater in Austin will further highlight Lyle's love of rhythm & blues in the great tradition of Ray Charles. After that, it's back to the drawing board to contemplate the next studio album.

And what's on tap for Lyle and the Large Band?

"I don't know. I've been writing a lot of songs about dying. So I guess the overall concept of the next album will be death."

I bet he'll find some way to make death swing and dance with a wicked smirk on its face. DB

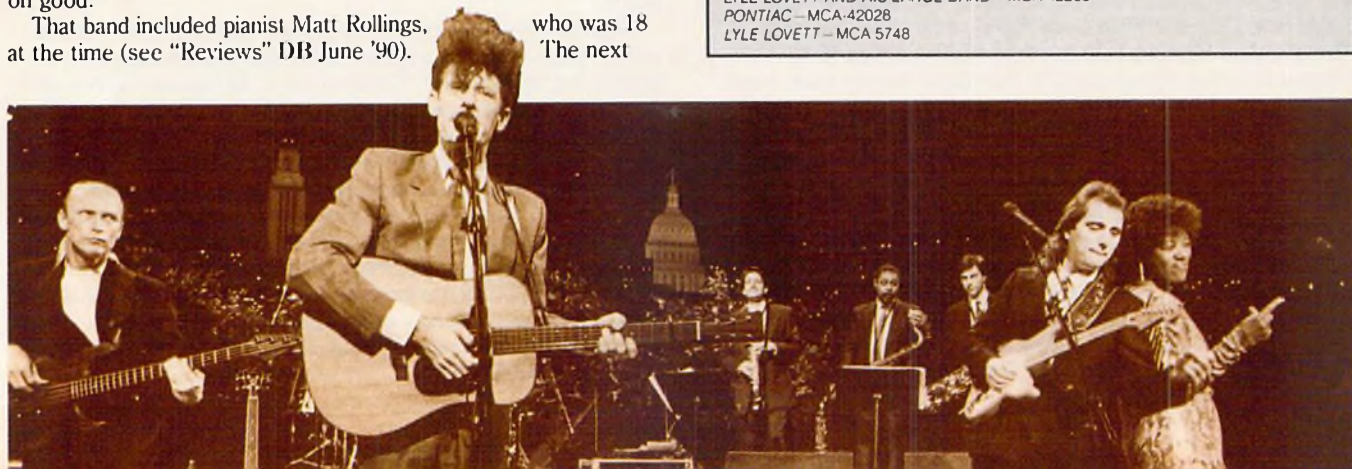
### LYLE LOVETT & HIS LARGE BAND'S EQUIPMENT

Lyle Lovett plays a Gibson Super 400 electric guitar and a custom-made acoustic dreadnaught flat-top made by Bill Collings of Austin. Lead guitarist Ray Herndon plays a Gibson ES-175 guitar and a '57 Fender Stratocaster reissue model. Bassist Matt McKenzie plays a Fender Precision bass. Pianist Matt Rollings switches from a Yamaha grand piano to a Yamaha DX7.

Cellist John Hagen plays an old English instrument made in 1900 by Thomas Earle Heketh. Drummer Dan Tomlinson plays a Yamaha kit. Lead saxophonist Steve Marsh plays Yamaha alto, tenor, and soprano saxes. Harvey Thompson plays a Selmer Mark VI tenor. Andy I. aster plays a Selmer Mark VI baritone as does his baritone sub Bobby Eldridge.

### LYLE LOVETT DISCOGRAPHY

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**M**alibu, California isn't so much a town—with a heart and a town square—as a high-priced real-estate ribbon stretching along the Pacific Ocean outside of Los Angeles. A coveted retreat from the urban turbines of L.A., it is home to many celebrities. In recent years, the jazz world has made its imprint on the citizenry as Miles Davis, Joe Zawinul, Herb Alpert, Charlie Haden, and Johnny Mandel have taken to the beach. Add to that list Stan Getz, currently residing at his friend/producer Herb Alpert's posh, postmodern home, directly across Pacific Coast Highway from the sand and sea.

And it is on the beach—Zuma Beach—where I find Getz, who suggests that we take a swim before an interview. "Ah, that ocean water brings me back to life," he beams. Getz is surprised to learn that Miles swims in the pool at the nearby Pepperdine University. "He doesn't swim in the ocean? I don't know—that chlorine in the water can't be too good for you."

Getz, a robust man who alternates between soft-spoken warmth and cut-the-crap curtness, has good reason to feel healthy at the moment, having gotten the better of a recent bout with cancer. Musically, his near-50-year musical career is reaching another zenith. In 1986, he joined the music department at Stanford University as an artist in residence. At present, Getz is making a belated but solid entre into the rejuvenated jazz market of the last few years. Suddenly, Getz is in the news, and the air, with several projects in release, e.g., his 1987 live date *Anniversary*, the four-CD reissue collection *The Bossa Nova Years*, *Dynasty* (a live date with a French rhythm section), and, most recently, his first album for A&M, *Apasio-*

BRIAN MCMILLEN



# STAN GETZ

*nado* (see "Reviews" June '90).

Produced and co-written by Herb Alpert (the A of A&M), *Apasionado* presents Getz in a new, well-produced light. Stylistically, the material manages—however intentionally—to cover the various bases of Getz career, from Latin-bossa-samba strains to elements of funk, plush balladry, and even

some big band horn accents.

"I had a real ball doing *Apasionado*," says Getz, stretched out on the beach. "We took our time. It was done in three days. I never took that long before. Well, we couldn't figure out what material to play. I got together with Herb and Eddie Delbarrio—the composer and synth player who I'm taking to Europe. I went up to Herb's house every day for three weeks and sort of put the skeleton together. That was the preparation we had.

"The melodies for Eddie, 'Waltz For Stan' and 'Lovely Lady,' were written out. The rest were all à la *Focus* [a 1961 sax-with-strings project with composer/arranger Eddie Sauter], made up over the background."

*Apasionado* is a departure for Getz in several ways. For one, it's the first time he has strayed from a traditional quartet format in some time. For Getz, the rhythm-section-with-horn-protagonist quartet is a classic format. "It's like a string quartet, I guess. One of each. Everybody's got to be a good soloist and good accompanist.

"I'll tell you, for my taste, there's really nothing in the whole world better than an acoustic rhythm section when it's popping. It seems to vibrate inside your body. You seldom get it, but when you get it, that can be felt. It's hard to achieve; you've got to have the right players in the right moods. A lot of times, listening to electric music just feels like I'm taking shock treatments."

Nonetheless, Getz hasn't taken a fundamental anti-electric instrument stance. "I say it's not the instruments you play, electric or otherwise. It's the musicians who play whatever kind of music it is. I wouldn't resist Joe Zawinul. I think he's a credit to our business."

By Josef Woodard

## BACK ON THE BEACH



VERYL OAKLAND

**W**riting tunes has never been a direction that Getz has pursued. "I've probably been too lazy. I wrote my first record date in '46, and I left my music in the cab going to the date. I got so interested and so crazed about trying to play the saxophone the way I wanted it to work for me. On this last album with Herb [Alpert], I have a hand in the writing. Some of the things I've played have been made into tunes on records. I'd play on the record date and then they were written down.

"Otherwise, I'm a sad-ass writer, a lazy writer. Everytime I did try to write something over the years, I'd get up the next morning and change it and the next morning change it again and the next . . . until I'd finally rip it up. It's because I'm a player, and players play something different every time.

"I guess you could call improvisation composition—extemporaneous composition. It's like an extemporaneous speaker, as long as you know the language, and how to phrase the language and to project your voice and to say something sensible, you have logic in your music, and form and content."

In that Getz hasn't recognized in himself the composer instinct, he has developed the art—like, say, vibist Gary Burton—of being a good tune hunter. He laughs at the idea: "And musician hunter, too. I think that's my forte, actually—finding music and musicians. I think Gary Burton was in the band for four and a half years with [bassist] Steve Swallow and [drummer] Roy Haynes. When Gary left, he recommended somebody I'd never heard of, this 18-year-old kid named Chick Corea. He turned out to be beautiful. Couldn't have been a better replacement for Gary."

At mid-afternoon, we pile into Getz's Mercedes station wagon as he goes to the dentist. I mention the simultaneous sense of calm and control in his playing—what seem like twin guideposts for Getz. "Oh shit," he says abruptly, stopping the car and backing up. "I was so deceptively calm that I forgot to close the gate." Are calm and control his mistresses? "In music. Not in life."

Was there a time when Getz felt that he came of age? "You never do. I was telling Christina [Von Bulow, a young Danish saxist who received a grant to come and study with Getz] about that. It seems that you go along for about five years and don't seem to improve. You get so miserable and don't seem to be going anyplace. Just before you get to reach the next plateau, you drop down a little bit. Then you go to the next plateau and it levels off until the next one."

The Bronx, N.Y., native fell in love with the West Coast in the early '40s. "I started with [trombonist] Jack Teagarden on the East Coast. We worked 365 straight one-nighters, in a Ford station wagon. Ended up here, the band broke up. I loved it here. I worked at a haberdashery shop on Holly-

wood and Vine, I worked as a short-order cook. It was during the war. I brought my parents out here. They still had ads in the *L.A. Times* for renting apartments, reading 'no children, no pets, no Jews.' We lived in the back of a barbershop until we found a Jewish building owner."

**J**azz work then mostly took place after-hours, out of sight. "We didn't get work playing jazz music. We got work playing rumba bands, nickey-mouse bands, dixieland bands . . . then, after work, we'd get together for jam sessions. We had a Model A club—we all had Model A Fords. I bought mine for \$68. It was a four-door sedan and it had wings on the hood. Don La Monte had one, Herbie Stewart had one, Steve White had one, and we'd find places to play that weren't about work; they were just jam sessions. We'd play jazz even though there weren't any jazz jobs. We'd support our families by working some dumb jobs."

Getz's reputation grew as he became one of the "Four Brothers" in Woody Herman's big band. Thereafter, he carved out a career as a leader in his own right, gaining prominence as a "cool school" kingpin. "I think cool jazz was a reaction to bebop.

During the war years, it was a more frenetic time, that's all. That's how it works. Things go in spurts."

1962's *Jazz Samba* was the album that puts Getz in the household-name category, as Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Desafinado" hit the charts with a vengeance. Later, his version of "The Girl From Ipanema" hit yet harder, rising to the top of the pop charts. "I just go in to make a record and I never try to grab a hold of the gold ring," he says, matter of factly. "If you try to psyche out trends and what the people will like, you're fooling yourself. The approach should always be to look for beautiful music. That music came along at a time when it was needed, like a breath of fresh air after the Kennedy assassination. The Beatles were on the top of every chart until we knocked them off that one time."

Not content to chase the "Girl" 's commercial clout, Getz involved himself in various contexts in the '60s. One of the many bright lights of the Getz discography is '67's *Sweet Rain*, an inspired set born of desperate circumstances. "You know, on the night before the recording of that album, both Roy Haynes and Steve Swallow came down with the flu. On the morning of the date, we hired Chick Corea, Grady Tate, and Ron Carter. They came in and sight-read that shit. We still sound like a working quartet.

"The record I'm proud of is *Focus*. That was one hell of an effort, to match up with those strings, with no music written, but just a score transposed into my key. I listen to that record and feel proud."

Resting on laurels, however, doesn't seem to be Getz's approach. "You make 'em and you go on. If you're a player, you think you can always change something for the better. You make a record and you're sorry you didn't play certain other things which you now feel you could have. You just ignore it and go on to the next one. I don't second-guess it anymore. It's done."

With his recent flurry of activity—at least in terms of publicly-visible activity—Getz takes his spot at the forefront of sax veterans who continue to search for new modes of expression. He has passed through most of the phases of jazz—swing, bop (briefly), cool, Latin-jazz, fusion (although he bristles at the idea of his being termed "the grandfather of fusion"), and a standards redux. Is he a product of all these branches on the jazz family tree? Did they leave their marks on him?

"If one did, I don't know," he says as we pull into *Chez Alpert*. "It's hard to say. Maybe somebody will classify me. I'll leave that up to you, Joe," he laughs.

"I really think I'm a product of today and tomorrow. Right now. I feel that there's no stopping me. I can do anything that I want. I just play. I always did, but now I feel I have the confidence in knowing that people want to listen. I'm a very sentimental character. I'm not jaded about jazz. I'm jaded about other things, but not about jazz. I shouldn't say the word jazz—all music." **DB**

TOM COR



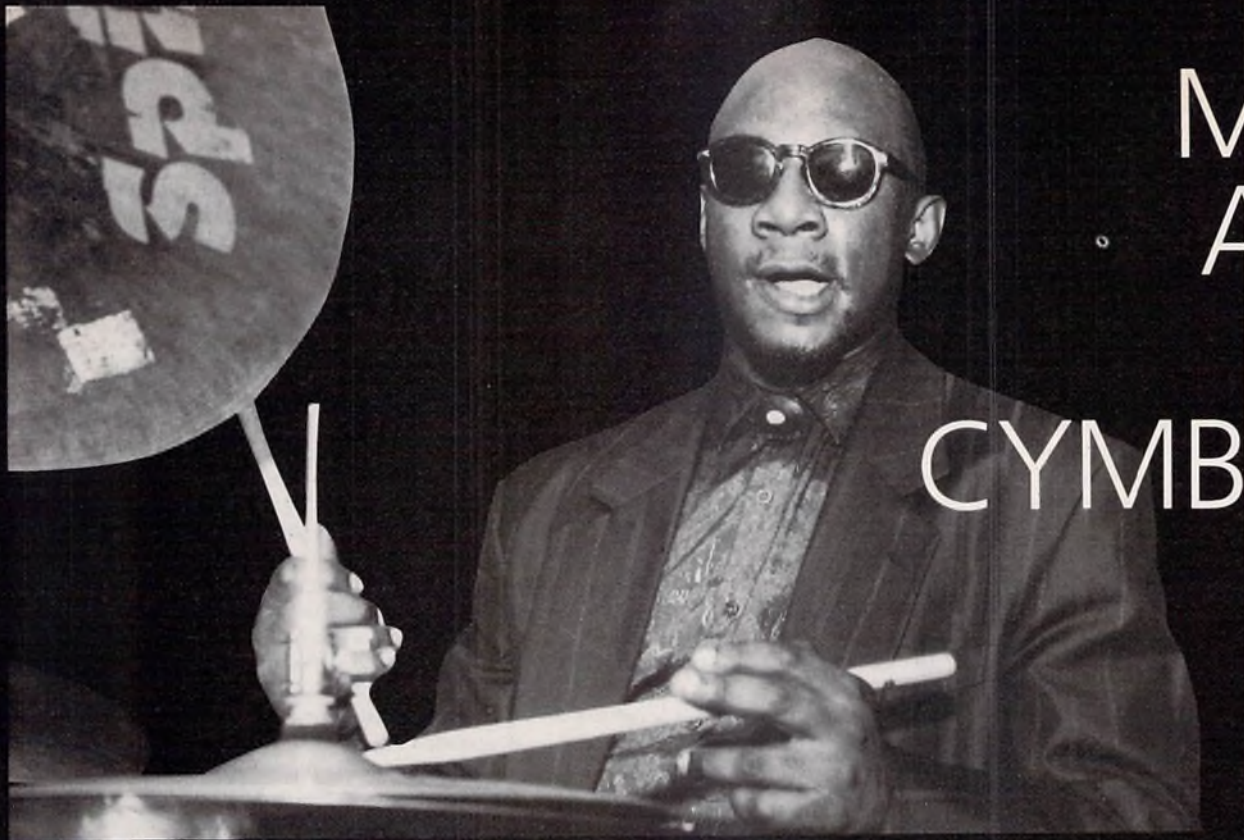
### STAN GETZ'S EQUIPMENT

Getz swears by his Selmer Mark VI tenor sax, using Rubber Link mouthpieces and Vandoren #3 and 3.5 reeds.

### STAN GETZ SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

- APASIONADO—A&M 5297
- ANNIVERSARY—Emarcy 838 769-2
- DYNASTY—Verve 839 117-2
- THE STOCKHOLM CONCERT—Gazell CD 1013
- THE GIRL FROM IPANEMA, THE BOSSA NOVA YEARS—Verve 823 611-2
- THE DOLPHIN—Concord Jazz CJ-158
- PURE GETZ—Concord Jazz CCD-4188
- CAPTAIN MARVEL—PC-32706
- FOCUS—Verve 821 982-2
- SWEET RAIN—Verve 815 054-2
- VOYAGE—Blackhawk BKH-51101-CD
- THE LYRICAL STAN GETZ—Columbia Jazz Masterpieces CJ-44047
- WITH EUROPEAN FRIENDS—Denon C38-7679
- with Arthur Fiedler and The Boston Pops
- A SONG AFTER SUNDOWN—RCA/Bluebird 6284-2-RB
- with Albert Dailey
- POETRY—Musician 60370-1-E
- with Charlie Byrd
- JAZZ SAMBA—Verve 810 061-2GH
- with Bill Evans
- STAN GETZ AND BILL EVANS—Verve 833 802-2
- with J.J. Johnson
- STAN GETZ AND J.J. JOHNSON AT THE OPERA HOUSE—Verve B31 272-2
- with Helen Merrill
- JUST FRIENDS—Emarcy 842 007-2



# MAN AND HIS CYMBALS

## RALPH PETERSON

ENID FARBEN

By Kevin Whitehead

**R**alph Peterson, Jr. talks like he plays. When he gets excited, he projects emphatically, and Raps. Out. Each. Word. Distinctly. When he laughs, his bark is like a rimshot. But in the middle of a staccato barrage, he'll suddenly drop his voice an octave, take the volume way down, and slur his words together real fast. His speech, like his drumming, features great variations in timbre, pitch, tempo, and dynamics. Still, some folks think He. Always. Plays. Like. THIS.

"A lot of people seem to feel that I'm a hard hitter all the time," Peterson says. "But I'm not necessarily loud as much as I am intense. My music isn't monodynamic—it has highs and lows." No troglodyte, he's a poet: "Cymbal patterns should be almost poetic, in terms of what the patterns say over a number of bars—given the importance of making the basic pattern swing.

"I'm sensitive to horn players, but I don't like to be part of musical situations that coast." That's part of what makes Peterson a good leader as well as a sterling drummer: he keeps things moving.

Two evenings at last summer's Knitting Factory Festival in New York made his case. At the traps with his own quintet, Ralph played strong, but didn't waste a move. Behind a soloist, he'd change his approach from bar to bar, prodding without interrupting the flow. At best, the band slipped between inside and outside approaches, as you might expect from its makeup—cornetist Graham Haynes and pianist Geri Allen are from the new Brooklyn gang, bassist Phil Bowler had played with Wynton Marsalis and Harrison/Blanchard; alto and soprano saxist Steve Wilson replaced Kenny Garrett in OTB. The quintet's sound has obvious roots in Miles' mid-'60s quintet—like Wynton's bands, like Harrison/Blanchard—but it's a hair more raucous. As Ralph says, "I like the music when it's on the edge."

How edgy he can make it was shown a few nights earlier, when he and bassist Mark Helias lit a fire under tenorist Dewey Redman. Dewey played some of the best tenor I've heard anywhere, steaming through long and amazingly inventive solos—he had to, or Peterson and Helias would have run him over. "I had the time of my life," Ralph remembers, but not only for musical reasons—his daughter Sonora was born the same week. (In fact,

her mother—Ralph's companion, bassist Melissa Slocum—brought week-old Sonora to that quintet gig.) "I always enjoy playing in trio settings, because I have the space to comp, and orchestrate, as opposed to just playing time. You need to do that in a 'chordless' trio. I think about comping the same way a piano player would."

Still, Redman let his rhythm men know he wouldn't think ill of them if they eased up a notch or two. "It was a real learning experience playing with Dewey; the way I thought I should play was not necessarily what he wanted. He talked to me about it between sets, and I seemed to give him what he wanted in the second set. Since that experience, I've gone back and tried to re-edit a lot of the things that I play. Not eliminate them, but just rethink what's necessary and what's not, because of the respect I have for the individual musicians."

Even now, though, he's not to every leader's taste. This past spring, British saxophonist Courtney Pine fired Ralph from his quartet—with pianist Cyrus Chestnut and bassist Charnett Moffett—three weeks into a five-week North American tour. (He was replaced by the more funk-oriented Codaryl Moffett.) Discussing it a few weeks later, Peterson was still understandably rankled: He Talked. About It. Like. This.

"Courtney's the kind of musician who likes an unobtrusive cushion, that allows him to play all the things that he's practiced. He doesn't want to be forced to deal with something he didn't see coming. But I'm always trying to take the music to the edge—to me, that's where true creativity lies. Playing stuff you know is going to work is not really creative. When you've played yourself into a hole, how you get out is what separates the adults from the children.

"The peculiar thing about Courtney is he didn't try to come to me and discuss it. At the beginning, on nights it was obvious there was trouble, I said, 'Look man, I'll be in my room if you want to talk.' But his position is, he doesn't talk about the music with the musicians he's playing with. A good leader is supposed to communicate.

"My job is to push the music, and anybody who doesn't want that shouldn't call me. I would appreciate them *not* calling me,



because it spares them the frustration and it spares me the frustration. Because you're under the assumption that people call you for you."

That probably makes Ralph sound hotheaded and arrogant. Actually, at the advanced age of 28 (born May 20, 1962, Pleasantville, N.J.), he's mellowed—noticeably calmer than he was a year or so ago. "I'm a lot happier than I was then," he admits. "My daughter has done a lot for me. So has Melissa, in terms of giving me the stability of a family relationship, so I can get to my music."

**F**amily has played a part in his music from the start. Ralph Peterson, Jr. took up the drums at age three. "My father was a union-gig drummer in Atlantic City, my four uncles played drums, and my grandfather played cymbals in the church.

"When I reached fourth or fifth grade, I realized I didn't know how to read music. I was self-taught, playing along with funk records. So in order to read music—and stroke my own ego—I opted to learn a new instrument altogether rather than unlearn my bad habits on the drums. My cousin had a trumpet; he let me play it and I liked it, so I started studying and learned how to read."

Fast forward to college—the jazz program at Rutgers University's Livingston College. He still hadn't learned his percussion rudiments, and flunked the drum audition Michael Carvin gave him. He got into the music department as a trumpeter. Peterson had impressive teachers: Kenny Barron for keyboard harmony, Paul Jeffrey for composition, Carvin for drums, and Bill Fielder for trumpet. "I had a double-instrument major, and realized how much one helps the other. I think it's given another dimension to my playing that even players who use mallet instruments can't experience. Standing in front of a drum set, trying to produce sound by blowing air, is a whole other thing than physically striking an object. And when I was playing trumpet, I wanted drummers behind me that *played*."

One of his classmates was trumpeter Terence Blanchard; Peterson's first recording was with the band Terence co-led with altoist Donald Harrison. (Blanchard also played in Ralph's quintet—he's on the albums *V* and *Volition*—before Graham Haynes joined the group.) Ralph would sub for Jeff Watts in Wynton Marsalis' quintet; through Blanchard and Marsalis he wound up getting to know Art Blakey, who honored Peterson by making him second drummer in the '80s' Messengers Big Band. Ralph's first high-profile gig was as drummer in OTB, the co-op sextet of up-and-comings put together by the Blue Note label.

"It was very useful—it gave me a lot of experience in the business world without having the weight totally on my shoulders. It acted as a stepping stone to getting my own group, which is why I went into it. But any co-op situation has a built-in self-destruct mechanism, because no two or four or five musicians grow at the same rate or in the same direction. And often in OTB, we were told how grateful we should be for the opportunity to play, instead of getting paid. The landlord doesn't want to hear how grateful you were to get the gig."

In the mid-'80s, Peterson also began long associations with inside trumpeter Jon Faddis and often-outside tenorist David Murray—all of which suggests his range, and the catholicity of his tastes. He doesn't care for divisive attitudes. "To pit one style of jazz against another—to have Wynton Marsalis insulting David Murray and David Murray insulting Wynton Marsalis—is to do a disservice to the music as a whole. The music we call jazz is broad enough to encompass them both, and much more besides. I don't have to justify what I do at the expense of somebody else who does something different."

Like Anthony Braxton, he's open to so much because he takes a long, *long* view of the cultural fusions that gave birth to jazz, beginning with ancient Egypt. Of the musicians who connect to the far past—who "capture a certain essence of the human spirit that existed long before instruments"—he mentions Braxton, Murray, Craig Harris (for his investigation of the *dijiridu*), and Ornette Coleman. His own vision of the drums reaches back to

the mother continent: "Swing, for me, has more to do with a triplet feel than a dotted eighth-note tied to a 16th note. I hear it as a quarter-note triplet without the second note: the two outside notes of the triplet. To impose that on music in 4/4 gives a sense of Africa."

A musician with good words for the Marsalises and Braxton and Steve Coleman (who "does a great job of addressing the funk idiom as it relates to musicians born after 1960") is rare enough. But Peterson does more than talk—he fits it all into his music. His "traditional modern" quintet currently plays his arrangement of an old Stylistics hit. And he has a new band, too: "The people who are into the more adventurous, less traditional sound and settings can deal with the quartet—the Fo'tet." This fourtet is a wonderfully clean-sounding unit, somehow hot and cool at once, with Don Byron on clarinet, new threat Brian Carrott on vibes, and Slocum on gut-string bass. (There have been and are other jazz couples, but Slocum and Peterson may be the only pair who work as a rhythm section.) On half of the Fo'tet's debut album—just out in Japan on Toshiba-EMI, and tentatively slated for U.S. release on Blue Note early in '91—they're joined by Murray and multi-brass expert Frank Lacy.

Rather than spreading himself too thin running two groups, Peterson sees it as a way to get focused, as a leader or sideman: "I no longer have this sense of urgency to get out these ideas that I have, maybe on a gig where it wasn't relevant. For instance, when I started working with David, my situation with Jon Faddis got better." The words flow smoothly; Ralph Peterson, Jr. sounds very much at peace.

DB



END FARBEN

### RALPH PETERSON'S EQUIPMENT

Ralph plays Zildjian cymbals and Zildjian 5A sticks. His drum set is mostly homemade, a result of having all his drums except his tom-toms stolen a few years ago. For example, his 18-inch bass drum used to be a floor tom; his 12½ x 15 floor tom is his ex-rack tom. He built his snare drum from an old metal shell. "Basically, I build my drums the same way the major companies do, in terms of hardware. I've got a little bit of everything on there."

### RALPH PETERSON SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>as leader</b>                                  | <b>with William Fielder</b>                             |
| <i>VOLITION</i> —Blue Note 93894                  | <i>LOVE PROGRESSION</i> —Prescription (no #)            |
| <i>TRIANGULAR</i> —Blue Note 92750                |   |
| <i>V</i> —Blue Note 91730                         | <b>with Roy Hargrove</b>                                |
| <b>with OTB</b>                                   | <i>DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH</i> —RCA/Novus 3082             |
| <i>LIVE AT MT FUJI</i> —Blue Note 85141           |   |
| <i>INSIDE TRACK</i> —Blue Note 85128              | <b>with Craig Harris</b>                                |
| <i>OTB</i> —Blue Note 85118                       | <i>BLACKOUT IN THE SQUARE ROOT OF SOUL</i> —JMT 834 415 |
| <b>with Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison</b> | <b>with David Murray</b>                                |
| <i>NASCENCE</i> —Columbia 40335                   | <i>I WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOU</i> —Black Saint 120 105    |
| <i>DISCERNMENT</i> —Concord Jazz 3008             | <i>BALLADS</i> —DIW 840 (CD)                            |
| <b>with Jon Faddis</b>                            | <i>DEEP RIVER</i> —DIW 8030                             |
| <i>INTO THE FADDISPHERE</i> —Epic 45266           | <i>LOVERS</i> —DIW 8020                                 |
| <b>with Walter Davis, Jr.</b>                     | <i>NEW LIFE</i> —Black Saint 120 100                    |
| <i>SCORPIO RISING</i> —SteepleChase SCS 1255      |   |

If you want to know what's happened to British blues great John Mayall over the last 15-to-20 years, all you have to do is listen to "I Can't Complain" from his impressive new album, *A Sense of Place* (Island 842 795; see "Reviews" p. 44). The rollicking rock 'n' blues song is a mini-biography of the real-life blues Mayall has been suffering. Written by his wife, Maggie Mayall (a member of the Los Angeles-based singing group the Housewives), the tune touches on John's encounter with the IRS (he was audited for unpaid back taxes), his coming to grips with his house burning down (it was one of 24 lost in the 1979 fires in Laurel Canyon outside of Los Angeles), his hurt feelings over never being invited to a Grammy Awards show, his broken-down cars, and his own broken heel (he sings, "Got me a broke leg acting like a fool/Jumped off my balcony and missed the pool").

But don't think this is one of those down 'n' out tearjerkers or pity pieces. The gritty-voiced Mayall gives the lyrics a reading infused with humor, accenting the non-plaintive spirit of the tune by singing in the bridge, "You can always make a list of what's going wrong/But your list of blessings will be twice as long."

"The broken-leg part of the song is about my drinking days," Mayall explains. "When I missed the pool, I landed on my heel, which got crushed to the consistency of corn flakes. I also broke my knee cap." He still limps as a result. Any other long-lasting effects? "That was one incident that got me to stop drinking. I've been sober for six years now. Throughout the '70s, I performed most of my shows drunk. You tend to forget what real life is all about when you're under a cloud of alcohol and drugs. The benefits of being sober are unbelievable. Now I have a lot clearer focus. My music has gotten a lot better and has more integrity since I've put more care into it."

Mayall points out that his decision to quit drinking came soon after he reformed the Bluesbreakers in 1982 with former members Mick Taylor and John McVie. The original Bluesbreakers, formed in 1963 by Mayall, was the seminal British blues band that included at various times such blues-influenced pop heavyweights as Jack Bruce, Mick Fleetwood, and Eric Clapton. Mayall was so important a figure in England's blues scene that he was known as "the Father of the British Blues." However, he contends the tag is inaccurate. "Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies triggered the transformation of London's club scene from traditional jazz of the '50s to electric blues in 1960 with their six-piece band influenced by Muddy Waters. Korner convinced me to move to London from Manchester, where I had a band called the Blues Syndicate. I formed the Bluesbreakers in 1963, we recorded our first album in '64, and it was released in '65." Mayall's Bluesbreakers went on to record seven more albums in the '60s, including the critically acclaimed *Blues From Laurel Canyon* (currently unavailable), *Blues Breakers* (with Clapton and McVie; London 800086),

# JOHN MAYALL

## A BREAK IN THE BLUES

By Dan Ouellette



CAROL FRIEDMAN

and Mayall's biggest seller, *Turning Point* (Polydor 823305), which features his best-known song, "Room To Move."

During the '70s, Mayall saw his recording career "dwindle and finally die out." He had what he calls, "a disastrous tenure" with ABC Records that "barely bothered to release the six albums I recorded for them." Mayall recorded three others for DJM, an

obscure British label, but his recording options ran out when that company folded in 1980. In the meantime, his stage career was still thriving. "I wasn't suffering too badly," he recalls. "I always had plenty of work, upwards of 120 to 130 shows a year, but my fans couldn't get a hold of any of my product." In 1982, he reformed the Bluesbreakers for a concert that included special guests Albert King, Etta James, Buddy Guy, and Junior Wells. There was still no record deal in the offing, but the popularity of a video of the performance, *Blues Alive*, showed Mayall that there was a market for the Bluesbreakers sound. "That acted as a springboard for revitalizing my career," Mayall notes. "It was like starting over completely with the recording industry."

In 1984 he began piecing together a new Bluesbreaker band, enlisting ace guitarist Coco Montoya and, the next year, drummer Joe Yuele. Soon after, a concert in Hungary was recorded and released by L.A.'s Crescendo Records as a live LP, *Behind The Iron Curtain* (GNP 2184). That led to a German record deal for two albums, *The Power Of The Blues* (n/a) and *Chicago Line*. The latter disc was subsequently released in the United States by Island Records (91005), which signed Mayall to do another album, his latest release. He's enthusiastic about *A Sense of Place*, especially with the support Island has been giving him. "We've done a lot of planning in putting this album together. The company has been actively involved in its inception, getting producer R.S. Field to work with us and also rounding up song choices for consideration." In addition to new Mayall compositions, there are songs written by J.B. Lenoir, J.J. Cale, and Sonny Landreth, who also contributed slide guitar and dobro licks on several numbers.

Mayall plays piano on the album as well as guitar and his trademark Hohner harmonica as he covers a wide range of styles, from acoustic and Cajun-spiced blues to r&b and boogie woogie. "I play more piano on this album than any I've ever recorded," he points out. "That helps me to capture the feeling of why I got into blues in the first place. When I was 13, I was obsessed with my father's 78 rpm collection of boogie-woogie piano songs. I learned how to play the piano one hand at a time so I wouldn't get all tangled up. The first year I practiced with just my left hand. Then I learned my right hand the following year. I learned how to play the guitar and harmonica later."

Polygram Records has control over most of Mayall's back catalog. With the growing popularity of the CD format, all of his albums should be re-released as CDs. There's even speculation that the label may set up a campaign to push the albums. Combined with a renewed interest in Mayall thanks to his new album and a current U.S. tour, this could well be the year that sees the blues great receiving an invitation to the Grammys. He deserves it. As he sings on "I Can't Complain": "But I know for certain, I can talk the blues/One thing's for sure, you know I've paid my dues." **DB**

# musicfest u.s.a.

## 1990 national finals

### NOTES TAKEN, NOTES PLAYED

By Frank Alkyer

**T**hey came to Oakland from all directions, first in a steady stream and then in a flood of excitement. Some were from places so far south that "bop" is best known as the sound a rodeo cowboy makes when he hits the ground. Others came from lands so flat that you can look out your window and still not see another musician for miles around.

From cities big and small; from colleges, high schools, and junior highs across the nation; with instruments in hand, student musicians poured into the Oakland Convention Center in April to take part in the finals of the fourth annual Musicfest U.S.A., hosted by **DOWN BEAT**.

As a group, the creme of the proverbial crop landed in Oakland. Not just the players, who were invited after competing in one of 76 regional affiliated festivals around the U.S., but also the professionals who performed, adjudicated, and offered clinics. Individually, the reasons for making the trek out West varied widely. Some were looking for scholarships, some for recognition. Still others came only seeking a chance to play, to see how good they really were; or simply to enjoy and compare notes with others dedicated to the art of making music. But each performer came with at least one common goal—to learn.

The following are a few of their stories.

#### The Performers

**///** started playing five years ago," said guitarist Scott Whigham. "But I didn't get into jazz until a year ago last December. I saw the movie *Bird* and it blew me away. I went out and bought two [Charlie Parker] albums and for

the next four months just kept listening to them and got the books and learned every solo on every record."

A senior at music powerhouse Booker T. Washington Performing Arts High School in Dallas, Whigham arrived in Oakland with a goal. "I'd like to go either to the New School or to Berklee," he said. "But you need the dough, you need the money. Scholarship dollars are a main reason I came. It would be nice to get something, but I came to learn and have fun, too. If we got last place, I wouldn't care. I did the best I could."

On the scholarship front, Whigham's 12-to-14-hour days of school and rehearsals paid off as he raked in offers from the New School, Berklee, and the University of Southern California as well as Fender's \$1,500 scholarship for the most outstanding guitarist.

But on the "fun" side of the event, like most Musicfest participants, Whigham could be found front and center most of the time carefully watching other groups, cheering solos that seemed to come from another world, and congratulating players when they walked off stage. "It's just fun," he said. "And some of these cats are amazing."

**W**hen Newton (Kan.) High School student Michelle Akin plays, people often give her strange looks. In a town of 18,000 that's 30 miles north of Wichita, there aren't too many women playing bass—especially in a jazz band. Even in Oakland, she was bas(s)ically alone, but loved every minute of it.

"People don't expect me to be able to do anything at all," Akin noted. They just say, 'Oh my gosh. Get her out.' And, then they're surprised. I'm not great, but I can hold my own."

Akin was playing cello in Newton's orchestra when director Keith Woolery tapped her because he was shorthanded in his rhythm section. Now, she's planning on continuing with music in college.

"I don't know how far I'll get in jazz because it's a lot harder for me," she said. "I'd love to play both. I like the Uptown String Quartet and Kronos [Quartet]. To play that kind of stuff would be awesome."

One of the most interesting things about Akin and the entire Newton group is that they came out solely for the experience because Kansas law will not let them compete for awards outside a 150-mile radius of the state. Still, Akin thought the trip was "fantastic."

"It's amazing," she said. "There are some really hot players in the jam sessions, like the pianist from Booker T. Washington [Jonathan Johnston]. People like that are my age and play like that. It makes me want to go back and work even harder."

#### The Directors

**K**evin Peters is not only the director of Fredonia College's Jazz Ensemble. He's also a player and a student.

The group from Upstate New York is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary as a student-run jazz ensemble and workshop.

Not being university-affiliated has forced the Ensemble to be highly motivated and organized. The group commissions charts from a variety of quality composers and arrangers, notably, Fredonia alumnus Don Menza. They try to make a record or CD each year, rehearsing six hours a week with additional sectional rehearsals.

"This is great," Peters said of the Musicfest audience. "We usually make so much noise because we're all we've got around."

**S**id Lasaine feels like he's died and gone to music heaven.

A self-proclaimed "old-timer" of 30 years with the Los Angeles school system, Lasaine's music programs were steadily declining because of funding cuts. Then, three years ago, he was sent to the brand-spanking new Hamilton High School, an arts



magnet. And, this year, his students showed up at Musicfest and walked away with a good number of awards and scholarships.

"I'm glad they played as well as they did because I think they feel the charge now," said Lasaine. "I feel the charge, too."

Unlike many arts magnets, Hamilton does not audition. Names of interested students are fed into a computer and the choices are made randomly. As Lasaine will attest, the system produces some interesting results.

"When you look at my band, you're looking at the United Nations sitting there," Lasaine said. "I've got Hispanic kids and black kids, Filipinos, white kids and mixed, rich and poor . . . I mean, I've got it all."

He's taken that mix and melded it into one heck of a high school jazz program.

**N**ova High School got to Musicfest as a fluke, according to its director Mark Humphreys. The Florida high school traditionally sends its band to Europe each spring as a performing and learning experience. But this year, Europe looked a little too expensive. So, he heard about Musicfest and both his symphonic band and jazz combo qualified.

"When you tour and play, it's nice," Hum-

phreys said. "But this is national and there are scholarships. I had five college scholarship recipients and three product scholarship recipients. My principal will be ecstatic. Now that I've seen what it's all about, I will do everything I can to come back."

And for the kids? "The best part of this is that I have these very nice and talented kids and amongst their peers, they don't get that much recognition. But they can come here on a truly national level and their hard work is recognized, it's truly rewarding for them."

Humphreys' jazz combo took a gold award while his symphonic band earned a silver in the high school division. "Being in on the inaugural end of the concert-band competition is really special," Humphreys beamed.

## The Teachers

"**D**o you remember when Sonny Rollins got out of the business for awhile and went out on the Brooklyn Bridge to practice?" Musicfest adjudicator and legendary bassist Reginald Workman asked a young saxophone player. "Well, look that story up. One of the reasons he did that was because

he was dealing with his tone. John Coltrane came along and made such a big noise that Rollins said, 'I'd better make a strong statement.' He went on that bridge for a year with no way to hear your sound bouncing back. Do not get up against the wall and hear your sound bouncing back. Get outside where there's no echo, no reverberation, and make your tone strong."

The opportunity to learn was everywhere at Musicfest and students sat up, took notes, and took notice. And, for their part, the competition's adjudicators and clinicians went far out of their way to not only congratulate players, but to coach them as well.

Wayne Gorder, director of bands at Kent State University, for example, sat down after spending nearly a half hour going over charts with students following their concert-band performance and said, "I love doing this. The whole Musicfest approach is terrific. What's captured the imagination of so many people is that you can be involved in playing musical forms that can be executed at various levels. There are teachers and players that are exposed to nothing more than pop-oriented music, but there are efforts being made for artistic expression.

## MUSICFEST U.S.A. 1990 NATIONAL FINALS ALL-STARS

### CONCERT BAND ALL-STARS

Alex Vieira, Nova H.S. Symphonic Band, Davie, FL  
Brandon Young, Agoura H.S. Wind Ensemble, Agoura Hills, CA

### ELECTRO COMBO ALL-STARS

Ted Forbes, Booker T. Washington Fusion Group, Dallas, TX  
David Jez, Canadian Youth Synthesizer Orchestra, St. Catharines, ON

### JAZZ COMBO ALL-STARS

Ralph Alessi, Cal-Arts Jazz Ensemble, Valencia, CA  
Randy Burgeson, Kent-Meridian Jazz Ensemble, Washinton, WA  
Chris Campbell, Chris Campbell Sextet-Mesa College, Mesa, AZ  
Josh Caplan, Princeton U. Liberal Arts Ensemble, Princeton, NJ  
Michelle Cassens, The Phillistine Quartet, Northfield, MN  
Doug Corella, Central Michigan U. Jazz Ensemble, Mount Pleasant, MI  
Craig Charles, American Conservatory Jazz Quintet, Chicago, IL  
Hilarie Davis, Booker T. Washington Vocal Solo & Trio 3, Dallas, TX  
Todd DeGiudice, Nova Jazz Combo, Davie, FL  
Christopher Dell, Christopher Dell Trio, Boston, MA  
Mike Elizondo, Hamilton H.S. Jazz Combo, Los Angeles, CA  
Charles Ferruggia, Brooks Giles Trio, New York, NY  
Kito Gamble, Berkeley H.S. Jazz Combo, Berkeley, CA  
Alex Graham, Community H.S. "1:45 Jazz Ens.", Ann Arbor, MI  
Tim Hegarty, Tim Hegarty Quartet, New York, NY  
Patrick Hughes, Sonoma State U., Jazz Combo, Rohnert Park, CA  
Jonathan Johnston, Booker T. Washington Jazz Quartet, Dallas, TX  
Nadji Lecompt, Pleasant Hill Jazz Combo, Pleasant Hill, OR  
Ryan Maynes, L.A.C.H.S.A. Modern Jazz Combo, Los Angeles, CA  
Dave Moore, U.S.C. Elf Combo, Los Angeles, CA  
Justin Mullins, Benicia H.S. Combo, Benicia, CA  
Heather Petznick, Belton H.S. Jazztet, Belton, MS  
Johnny Rabb, Rio Americana H.S. Jazz Combo, Sacramento, CA  
Jason Reed, Wilson H.S. Jazz Combo, Portland, OR  
Greg Sabin, Arden Jazz Combo, Sacramento, CA  
Debra Scharringhausen, Tarboro H.S. Jazz Combo, Tarboro, NC  
Paul Scott, Hemet J.H.S. Combo, Hemet, CA  
Gayle Serdau, U.S.C. Jazz Combo, Los Angeles, CA  
Mike Sim, Jamioto Jazz Combo, New York, NY  
Laura Smith, Booker T. Washington Vocal Solo & Trio 2, Dallas, TX  
Tom Surace, Ron Surace Quartet, Jacksonville, AL  
Doug Thompson, Lexington H.S. Jazz Combo, Lexington, MA  
Alison Wedding, Booker T. Washington Vocal Solo & Trio 1, Dallas, TX  
Scott Whigham, Booker T. Washington Jazz Combo, Dallas, TX

### STAGE BAND ALL-STARS

Chris Brucker, Mandan Jazz Ensemble "1", Mandan, ND

Matt Calderin, Nova H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Davie, FL  
Danny Chai, Caroline Davis Jr. H.S. Stage Band, San Jose, CA  
Mike Collins, Cal Poly Jazz Ensemble, Pomona, CA  
Kimberly Cook, St. Joseph's U. Jazz Ensemble, Philadelphia, PA  
John Daversa, Hamilton H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Los Angeles, CA  
Brian Denny, Arden Jazz Ensemble, Sacramento, CA  
Stefano Dezerega, U.C.S.C. Big Band, Santa Cruz, CA  
Mike Ende, St. Joe's Jazz Lab. Band, Buffalo, NY  
Greg Floor, Skyline H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Salt Lake City, UT  
Mia Forney, Wilson, H.S. Advanced Stage Band, Portland, OR  
David Gordon, Crane Jazz Ensemble, Potsdam, NY  
Allison Gravesstock, Paragons Jazz Band, Morrisville, NY  
Raffa Grunschlag, Los Lomas H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Walnut Creek, CA  
Geoff Hamamoto, Clovis West H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Fresno, CA  
Jim Hatton, Amador Valley H.S. "A" Jazz Band, Pleasanton, CA  
Mike Jones, Newton H.S. Jazz Ensemble I, Newton, KS  
Greg Kempster, Rio Americano H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Sacramento, CA  
Kevin Wallis, Mike Nichols, Hemet Jr. H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Hemet, CA  
Kevin Kobielusz, Wright Notes, Wright, WY  
Tyler Kuebler, Agoura H.S. Jazz Ensemble "A", Agoura Hills, CA  
Jon Ladines, Kent-Meridian Jazz Ensemble, Washington, WA  
Craig Levine, Princeton U. Jazz Ensemble, Princeton, NJ  
Brent Lollis, Berryhill H.S. Jazz Band, Tulsa, OK  
Neil Maca, U. of Nevada Las Vegas Jazz Ensemble, Las Vegas, NV  
Tom Makerness, Folsom H.S. Jazz Band, Folsom, CA  
Jermaine Malone, Berkeley H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Berkeley, CA  
Cathy Mark, Elk Grove H.S. Jazz Band, Elk Grove, CA  
Jessy Murphy, U.S.C. Studio Jazz Ensemble, Los Angeles, CA  
Sean Murphy, Bullard H.S. Jazz Ensemble, Fresno, CA  
Richard Norfies, Merced H.S. Jazz Ensemble A, Merced, CA  
Kevin Peters, Fredonia Jazz Ensemble, Fredonia, NY  
Pete Plenninger, Belton H.S. Jazztet, Westerty, RI  
Jing Tsu, Farmington H.S. Screamin' Scorpis, Farmington, NM  
Reginald Ward, Green Oaks Lab. H.S. Band, Shreveport, LA  
Brian Windhelm, Solar Jazz, Pleasant Hill, OR

### VOCAL ALL-STARS

Nathan Duehr, Green Mountain H.S., Lakewood, CO  
Travis Hanson, Hamilton Street, Douglas, WY  
Dawn Kirby, Jazz at 8, Tuolumne, CA  
Andji Le Compte, Ascensions, Pleasant Hill, OR  
Eddie Maglianco, Folsom H.S. Jazz Choir, Folsom, CA  
Jason Marx, Bellflower Vocal Jazz Ensemble, Bellflower, CA  
Chatele Milton, Hemet H.S. Jazz Choir, Hemet, CA  
Jay Padama, Jazzmins, Alameda, CA  
India Velasquez, Soquel Jazz Singers, Soquel, CA

# record & cd reviews

★★★★ EXCELLENT    ★★★ VERY GOOD    ★★ GOOD    ★ FAIR    ★ POOR



## DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND

**THE NEW ORLEANS ALBUM**—Columbia C/CT/CK 45414: *INSIDE STRAIGHT; WHEN I'M WALKING; HANNIBAL; DON'T YOU FEEL MY LEG; THAT'S HOW YOU GOT KILLED BEFORE; SONG FOR BOBE; THE MONKEY SPEAKS HIS MIND; SNOWBALL; ME LIKE IT LIKE THAT; KIDD JORDAN SECOND LINE.*

**Personnel:** Gregory Davis, trumpet, vocal, percussion; Efreem Towns, trumpet; Kevin Harris, tenor sax, percussion; Roger Lewis, baritone and soprano saxes; Kirk Joseph, sousaphone; Jenell Marshall, snare drum, percussion, bass drum (cuts 8, 10); Lionel Batiste, bass drum, percussion, snare drum (8, 10); Charles Joseph, trombone (2, 9); Danny Barker, guitar, vocal (4, 5); Dave Bartholomew, trumpet, vocal (7); Eddie Bo, piano (2, 4, 6); Elvis Costello, vocal (5).

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Critics are split on the Dozen. In a recent issue of the *Village Voice*, Robert Christgau called the DDBB "The lounge band of a tourist's dream." On the other end of the spectrum there's Bob Porter (Atlantic reissue producer and radio host of the syndicated *Portraits In Blue*), who believes that the DDBB is the most happening, revolutionary thing to come out of jazz since the birth of bebop.

Regardless of their stature or their impact on the history of jazz, the DDBB is undeniably fun listening, churning out those infectious good-time grooves with a sense of humor and laidback nonchalance that is endemic to the Nawlins experience. On this followup to last year's more eclectic and commercially-calculated *Voodoo*, the Dozen basks proudly in its Crescent City roots and deepens that vibe by bringing along three New Orleans legends for the ride—Eddie Bo, Dave Bartholomew, and the venerable Danny Barker.

Bo sets a party tone with Fats Domino's "When I'm Walking (Let Me Walk)" and Bartholomew carries on like Louis Jordan on "The Monkey Speaks His Mind," his answer to Jordan's "Beware." Danny Barker reprises his classic naughty song, "Don't You Feel My Leg," sounding as relaxed and as full of good humor as you'd catch him on any Friday night at the Palm Court Jazz Cafe in the heart of the French Quarter. One other guest star, popmeister Elvis Costello, sounds right at home on Bartholomew's "That's How You Got Killed Before," returning the favor from a DDBB appearance on his last Columbia album.

More fun from Gregory Davis' "Me Like It Like That," a catchy calypso in the tradition of Jordan's "Run Joe," and on the shuffling "Kidd Jordan Second Line." Instrumentally, the solo-

ists stretch out on a few numbers. Highlights include Roger Lewis' "out" baritone wail and Davis' vocal trumpet stylings on Davis' original, "Hannibal." And check out Kirk Joseph's hip basslines on "Snowball."

But this album ain't about soloing. It's about pattin' your foot. And if you can't get to this groove, you got a hole in your soul. (reviewed on cassette)

—Bill Milkowski



## LOU REED/JOHN CALE

**SONGS FOR DRELLA**—Sire 9 26205-2: *SMALLTOWN; OPEN HOUSE; STYLE IT TAKES; WORK; TROUBLE WITH CLASSICISTS; STARLIGHT; FACES AND NAMES; IMAGES; SLIP AWAY (A WARNING); IT WASN'T ME; I BELIEVE; NOBODY BUT YOU; A DREAM; FOREVER CHANGED; HELLO IT'S ME.* (54:55 minutes)

**Personnel:** Reed, vocals, guitars; Cole, vocals, keyboards, viola.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Andy Warhol is dead, but he lives on majestically in this brilliant album conceived by the two creative forces behind the legendary and seminal New York City rock group Velvet Underground. More than a simple tribute to the pop art innovator of the '60s who took the Velvets under his wing for a spell, *Songs For Drella* is a heartfelt and intimate biography-in-song written and sung for the most part from Warhol's point of view. Not only are Warhol's thoughts and spirit released by using this first-person literary device, but one senses that Reed and Cale, in probing the mind and heart of the man, completed their grief work in writing and recording the songs. Far from being a sentimental celebration of Warhol, these songs take a hard look at his insecurities, idiosyncrasies, and obsessiveness as well as his genius, confidence, and artistic courage. Even the unreconciled falling out of Reed and Warhol does not get a gloss-over treatment as we feel Warhol's hurt over being snubbed and ignored by Reed.

Reed and Cale share lead vocal duties and create a musical landscape that ranges from simple melodies with spare instrumentation to agitation rockers with snarling guitar and crazed, wailing viola. Careful attention has been paid to the crafting of lyrics, such as the poetry in the lines "My skin's as pale as the outdoors moon/My hair's silver like a Tiffany watch," from "Open House." There's soul to these songs that are at once confessional, reflective, and compassionate. Each song is a chapter about Warhol's life, beginning with "Smalltown," a pleasant piano ditty where Warhol reflects on his youth as an oddity in "small

town" Pittsburgh and ending with "Hello It's Me," Reed's quiet and contrite eulogy to the Brillo-box artist.

In "Work," one of a couple songs not in the Warhol first-person point of view, Reed complains that Andy pushed him too much and made him feel guilty for not producing more music. Reed sings, "No matter what I did it never seemed enough/He said I was lazy, I said I was young/He said, 'How many songs did you write?'/I'd written zero, I lied and said, 'Ten'/You won't be young forever/You should have written fifteen."

How many songs on this album? Fifteen. Warhol was instrumental in helping the Velvets realize their potential in the '60s. Twenty-five years later, his spirit does the same for Reed and Cale in this extraordinary work of art. (reviewed on CD)

—Dan Ouellette



## MOSE ALLISON

**MY BACKYARD**—Blue Note 84-93840: *EVER SINCE I STOLE THE BLUES; YOU CALL IT JOGGIN'; BIG BROTHER; SENTIMENTAL FOOL; STRANGER IN MY OWN HOMETOWN; WAS; THE GETTIN' PAID WALTZ; DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE; THAT'S YOUR RED WAGON; LONG SONG; SLEEPY LAGOON; MY BACKYARD.*

**Personnel:** Allison, piano, vocals; Tony Dagradi, tenor sax; Steve Masakowski, guitar; Bill Huntington, bass; John Vidacovich, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

Mose Allison, to borrow one of his deliciously sarcastic song aphorisms, hasn't ever worried about a thing 'cause he's always known nothing's going to be all right. Back in the mid-1950s, this budding jazzman, raised in the Delta and educated at LSU, brought his singing and piano playing—pithy, peekaboo pixilated, soaked in back-country blues—to New York City where he fell in with Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, and Stan Getz. Stature as a real cool Daddy-O (an urban pessimist full of languid Southern charm) soon came his way . . . and stuck.

Those listeners who've curled up with any of Mose's previous 25 or so records will quickly take to *My Backyard*. The jazz mahatma's distinctive drawl puts forth more wry, what-meworry? notions on human nature and experience, these days from a suburban, middle-aged perspective, while again evidencing his long-established rascality of intonation and phrasing. The lyrics to his songs mosey along in step with an appealing incisiveness ("Was," "Stole The Blues," "Sentimental Fool") or a less effective magnetism ("Big Brother," "Dr. Jeekyll"). Also, John D. Loudermilk's "Joggin' "

and the chestnut "Red Wagon" tickle us as amiable parodies; Percy Mayfield's "Home-town" pleases the most for the foxy felicity Allison imparts to its golden words.

Visitors to Mose's *Backyard* will find the music just as inviting. His piano, whether bluesy, in a bop bag, or tintured with Ivesian iconoclasm, distills his musical ideas and deep feelings effectually: he's a square-shooter. The Crescent City jazz players on hand perform with character, whooping it up best when gripped by the second-line fever in "Big Brother." Fussily said, though, guitarist Steve Masakowski's blues lines are frosty formalities and otherwise-fine drummer John Vidacovich tends to lapse into inapt hyperactivity.

Bottom line: Mose remains one hep cat. (reviewed on cassette) —Frank-John Hadley



## DONALD BYRD

**GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS**—Landmark LCD-1523-2: *THEME FOR MALCOLM; THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO LOVE; POMPONIO; I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD; A CERTAIN ATTITUDE; THE ONLIEST; AROUND THE CORNER.* (55:24 minutes)

**Personnel:** Byrd, trumpet, flugelhorn; Kenny Garrett, alto sax (except on cuts 2 and 6); Joe Henderson, tenor sax; Donald Brown, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Al Foster, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

## ROY HARGROVE

**DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH**—RCA/Novus 3082-2-N: *PROCLAMATION; RUBY MY DEAR; A NEW JOY; CONFIDENTIALITY; BROSKI; WHISPER NOT; ALL OVER AGAIN; EASY TO REMEMBER; PREMONITION; BHG; WEE.*

**Personnel:** Hargrove, trumpet; Ralph Moore, tenor sax (1,7,9,10); Antonio Hart, alto sax; Geoffrey Keezer (1,5,7,9), John Hicks (2-4,6,8,11), piano; Charles Fambrough (1,5,7,9), Scott Colley (2-4,8,11), bass; Al Foster (2-4,6,8,11), Ralph Peterson, Jr. (1,5,7,9,10), drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Deeply influenced by Clifford Brown, trumpeter Donald Byrd worked with Art Blakey, Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, and Thelonious Monk in the '50s, and led a string of classic Blue Note sessions, some with his protégé Herbie Hancock, in the '60s. Despite his formidable credentials and a string of fusion hits in the '70s, Byrd was forced into semi-retirement in the '80s, but now he's back,

# a DIRTY DOZEN Brass Bash

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the DIRTY DOZEN brass BAND

the NEW ORLEANS ALBUM ON COLUMBIA

Elvis Costello appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc. Produced by Scott Billington. Representatives: Kasebild Columbia

mellowed but unbowed. Roy Hargrove, another Brown disciple, is a product of the kind of jazz-education program Byrd helped pioneer; just 20 years old, he's already performed with Wynton Marsalis, Bobby Watson, Ricky Ford, Clifford Jordan, George Coleman, and Jack McDuff, and shows the sort of promise Brownie had only begun to fulfill when his life was tragically cut short.

Byrd had settled into a teaching career before coming back on Orrin Keepnews' Landmark label. *Getting Down To Business*, his second Landmark date, was recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's New Jersey studio (where Byrd

cut his Blue Note sides) and features tenor saxist Joe Henderson, another hard-bop stalwart. Both players took more exploratory paths as the '60s progressed, but here Byrd's questing solos never ramble beyond the changes, and Henderson's angry burr has softened to a husky purr. Four sharp, young neo-boppers round out the band, but there's no generation gap, as the whole sextet melds in a rich, refined, beautifully recorded evocation of hard-bop's heyday, highlighted by a gorgeous arrangement of James Williams' "A Certain Attitude." Byrd, a master of shading, is in top form, deftly probing between the notes of his own

Monk-ish composition, "The Onliest." But time has polished away his cutting edge, and he glows where he once glistened. (reviewed on CD)

Hargrove was bitten by the jazz bug at his Dallas high school, where a visiting Wynton Marsalis discovered him. He won a **DB** scholarship to Berklee, then transferred to New York's New School, whose current faculty includes Donald Byrd. *Diamond In The Rough*, Hargrove's solo debut, features two of his Berklee classmates, pianist Geoff Keezer and Antonio Hart, whose lithe and fluent alto sax overshadows Ralph Moore's tenor. The overall sound is remarkably uniform, with bright, Messenger-ish themes like the romping Hargrove original, "Confidentiality," and Keezer's "BHG," and crisp, agile solos rendered with period-piece authenticity. Hargrove's robust, singing tone, and clean articulation—as on his lilting "All Over Again"—are reminiscent of Brown and early Freddie Hubbard; only his callow ballads give his age away. (reviewed on cassette) —Larry Birnbaum

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Jazz vocalist **Abbey Lincoln** shows startling emotional depth and tremendous originality on this terrific tribute to Lady Day highlighted by the classics, "I'll Be Seeing You," "I Only Have Eyes For You," "Strange Fruit" and "These Foolish Things" among others.

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enja



## ROBERT PLANT

**MANIC NIRVANA**—Atlantic 7 91336-2: *HURTING KIND (I'VE GOT MY EYES ON YOU); BIG LOVE; S S S & Q; I CRIED; SHE SAID; NIRVANA; TIE DYE ON THE HIGHWAY; YOUR MA SAID YOU CRIED IN YOUR SLEEP LAST NIGHT; ANNIVERSARY; LIAR'S DANCE; WATCHING YOU.* (49:37 minutes)

**Personnel:** Plant, vocals; Doug Boyle, guitar; Chris Blackwell, drums; Phil Johnstone, keyboards; Charlie Jones, bass; Siddi Makain Mushkin, voices (cut 11).

★ ★ ★ ½

It's surprising that, 10 years after Led Zeppelin threw in the towel, it is not guitarist Jimmy Page who has extended the Zep legacy but Robert Plant. It goes to show: vocalists have brains, too. Plant's fifth solo album is another solid and subtly venturesome entry, full of visceral riffing, conceptual production, intelligent tune-smithing... not to mention muscular vocals.

Led Zeppelin—long mistaken for a heavy-metal prototype—was one of the great eclectic rock bands, freely tapping into odd meters and quasi-ethnic tonalities in the line of duty. Plant's solo albums, too, have embraced the unexpected; the underrated *Shaken And Stirred*, for instance, was stirred up by drummer Richie Hayward's angular grooves.

On *Manic Nirvana* (more crackpot mysticism à la his last title, *Now And Zen*), the arid acoustic luster of "Liar's Dance" hearkens back to *Led Zeppelin III*, and the hauntingly exotic temperament of "Watching You" sounds like

an outtake from *Physical Graffiti* (had there been digital gear then). On his version of Kenny Dino's '60s ditty, "Your Ma Said You Cried In Your Sleep Last Night," Plant continues his ploys of self-reference and techno puns with surface crackle (a wry ode to vinyl) contrasting with machinated rhythms, with Plant himself quoting lines from "Black Dog" to a playful shuffle.

For Plant, history repeats and reforms itself. And, finally, revives itself. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard



## CHARLES MINGUS

**EPITAPH** — Columbia C2K 45428: MAIN SCORE PART 1; PERCUSSION DISCUSSION; MAIN SCORE PART 2; STARTED MELODY; BETTER GET IT IN YOUR SOUL;

THE SOUL; MOODS IN MAMBO; SELF-PORTRAIT/THE CHILL OF DEATH; O.P. (OSCAR PETTIFORD); PLEASE DON'T COME BACK FROM THE MOON; MONK, BUNK & VICE VERSA (OSMOTIN'); PEGGY'S BLUE SKYLIGHT; WOLVERINE BLUES; THE CHILDREN'S HOUR OF DREAM; BALLAD (IN OTHER WORDS, I AM THREE); FREEDOM; INTERLUDE (THE UNDERDOG RISING); NOON NIGHT; MAIN SCORE REPRISE. (72:52/54:30 minutes)

**Personnel:** Randy Brecker, Wynton Marsalis, Lew Soloff, Jack Walrath, Joe Wilder, Snooky Young, trumpet; Eddie Bert, Sam Burtis, Paul Faulise, Urbie Green, David Taylor, Britt Woodman, trombone; Don Butterfield, tuba; John Handy, Jerome Richardson, Bobby Watson, George Adams, Roger Rosenberg, Gary Smulyan, saxophone; Phil Bodner, oboe; Michael Rabinowitz, bassoon; Dale Kleps, contrabass clarinet; John Abercrombie, guitar; Karl Berger, vibes; Sir Roland Hanna, John Hicks, piano; Reggie Johnson, Edwin Schuller, bass; Victor Lewis, drums; Daniel Druckman, percussion; Gunther Schuller, conductor.

★ ★ ★ ★

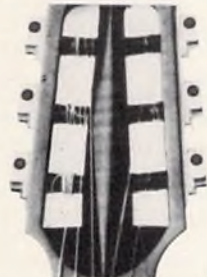
It's doubtful that anyone fully understood Charles Mingus, emotionally or musically, during his turbulent lifetime, and in the 11 years since his death our view of his remarkable art has grown even more distant and one-sided. Mingus reveled in contrasts, contradictions, and chaos. But—the various editions of The Mingus Dynasty notwithstanding—we've

tended to simplify his legacy, acknowledging his virtuoso bass playing and inspirational bandleading, perhaps ignoring his most personal, important, and frequently puzzling contribution: his composing.

Mingus' compositional ambitions and achievements extended far beyond the half-dozen or so familiar themes that provide small bands with jamming material... even beyond the multi-sectioned "classics" like *The Black Saint And The Sinner Lady* and *Pithecanthropus Erectus* that exist so powerfully on disc but in no one's active repertory. Our ability to hear his large, complex, uncategorizable scores is in jeopardy. But thanks to the efforts of Andrew Homzy and Gunther Schuller, Mingus' sprawling score, *Epitaph*, has been salvaged from nearly three decades of neglect. It's a flawed masterpiece, but a masterpiece nevertheless, and, in so many ways, a revelation.

Originally designed (though never completed) for a disastrous 1962 Town Hall concert/recording session, *Epitaph* is not Mingus' autobiography in sound, nor was it intended to serve as a summation of his career to that point. It seems that he conscientiously avoided using his best-known themes, and some of the "movements" (the music is not a continuously developed, flowing fabric but a sequence of separate, self-contained pieces) were apparently composed or sketched out as much as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38



THE FIRST JAZZ RECORDING IN NEARLY FIVE YEARS BY THE GUITARIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

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## HEART FULL OF HENDRIX

by Gene Santoro

In 1990, it would be hard to overstate **Jimi Hendrix's** impact. The sculpted sonic images he built for each tune, the unfettered virtuosity that pushed him to probe and invent ways to distort and extend sound, the sheer variety and skill of his compositional approaches have won admirers from Miles Davis and Gil Evans to Brian Eno, Prince, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Whether we know it or not, Hendrix changed the way we hear.

So it's fitting that we look at his catalog, now that it's being transferred to compact disc, and see how—and how well—digital sound changes the way we hear Hendrix. Going digital shouldn't change it much, because Hendrix and (his longtime engineer) Eddie Kramer's understanding of the stereo image and sonic range was superior to most contemporary producers' and artists'. His studio efforts just need a little redefinition and hiss reduction. Unless otherwise noted, that's what the CDs below do. (Live albums, of course, are a different story.)

Here, in user-friendly order from greatest-hits packages through his actual albums to posthumous releases, are some basic Hendrix CD selections. Now, Hendrix's disc legacy is complicated. In the '60s, U.S. and U.K. labels released albums with the same name but with different numbers of cuts; extra tunes from the U.K. would appear on later "catch-up" compilations. Of Hendrix discs, only *Are You Experienced?* follows that pattern: where the U.K. version had "Red House," "Can You See Me," and "Remember," the U.S. deleted those and included the singles "Purple Haze," "Hey Joe," and "The Wind Cries Mary."

Hendrix's discography is also swelled by dozens of live recordings and the reams of tape he left, in varying stages of completion, in studio vaults. Then too, record-company marketing can make buyers' options difficult: do I pick up yet another compilation because it's got this otherwise unavailable single or B-side? How many duplicates can I stand? The intensity of Hendrix fans knows no bounds. In this, as in more musical things, Charlie Parker is one of his few rivals.

*Smash Hits* (Warner Bros. 2276-2; 45:43 minutes: ★★★) collects the singles, and includes a couple of otherwise hard-to-find tracks like "51st Anniversary," the B-side from "Hey Joe," "Stone Free," and "Can You See Me." Annotation is minimal, and except for the rarities, this album is like dipping your toe in the ocean on a long, hot summer's night. *Essential Jimi Hendrix* (Reprise 26035-2; 136:36: ★★★★★) is what it says: a 32-track, two-CD set that compiles a skeletal frame from Hendrix's body of work. Like any skeleton, it can tell you more than you'd guess: by showcasing Hendrix's studio prowess, it may open the ears of guitar swaggerers who don't realize that he wasn't just a swashbuckling soloist but a dedicated songwriter, arranger, and producer who used his ax to create sonic tapestries around meaningful tunes. Oh yeah: it's also got "Gloria," his reimagining of the 1966 Shadows Of Knight hit that, until issued on LP,



JOSEPH SLA

was only available as a seven-inch 45. And finally, there's *Kiss The Sky* (Reprise 25119-2; 46:44: ★½), an early digital sampling that had the first (legit) offering of Hendrix's blistering take on Howlin' Wolf's "Killing Floor"; that cut's back on *Jimi Plays Monterey* (below), so skip this CD.

The new Reprise digital transfers reveal some inherent strengths and weaknesses of the Sonic Solutions process that's becoming popular for major-label digitalizing. Excellent for removing low-end rumbles and notching out unwanted ticks, Sonic Solutions can have drastic effects when used to cut that CD bugaboo, tape hiss. Unfortunately, erasing hiss all too often means eliminating the high end that gives definition and life to instruments and vocals via overtones; it can also suck out the ambient sound that acts as sonic glue to keep the stereo image from degenerating into discrete subsets of sonic information.

For Hendrix's first two albums, *Are You Experienced?* (Reprise 6261-2; 41:01: ★★★★★½) and *Axis: Bold As Love* (Reprise 6281-2; 39:33: ★★★★★½), you can still hear that ambience, although the first is a bit more vacuumed-out than the second, possibly because it was a three- and four-track recording. Aside from that caveat—which you can ignore if you're not a hard-core listener—both pack more sonic info than the older CDs of the same, mainly because they're taken from better-quality master tapes. Note for fans: the original wraparound *Axis* LP cover is still cut in half (with the mid-part still missing) and vertical on the new CD booklet.

For true fans, *Electric Ladyland* (Polydor 823 359-2; 75:58: ★★ & Reprise 6307-2; 75:36: ★★★★★), the most fully-realized of all Hendrix studio projects, is available in three, soon to be two, forms. The two-CD Polydor import, made from LP submaster tapes, sounds worse than a decent LP. Because the original double-LP followed the period's changer-oriented format—one record had sides A and D, the other, sides B and C—the two CDs do also; to play the album the way Hendrix envisioned, you've got to shift CDs mid-listen. But it's got its original naked-ladies picture cover, which was replaced in the U.S. by a head shot of Hendrix.

When Reprise issued its two-CD *Ladyland*, it corrected the side-order problem and improved the sound by using a better-quality

tape for mastering. Now *Ladyland* is a single CD (same cat. #: 75:27: ★★★★★) that reveals some Sonic Solutions limitations, maybe because a lot of it was originally produced by weaving myriad overdubs and fragments into finished tracks. The different levels of processing cause hiss and masking to fluctuate cut to cut. So post-Sonic Solutions, the album yields varying degrees of freeze-dried imaging and significant distortion, like the overblown bass and queasy phasing on "Have You Ever Been (To Electric Ladyland)." Live-in-the-studio tracks, like "Voodoo Chile," have a slightly airless, 1980s studio sound but are otherwise okay: individual instruments tend to be a tad clearer and sharper than on older issues. But why divide "1983. . . . (A Merman I Should Turn To Be)" so that half of it is part of the next track? That messes up programming nicely.

*Band Of Gypsies* (Polydor 821 933-2; 45:32: ★★★★★½) was recorded live and released (on Capitol rather than Reprise in this country) to settle a dispute over the guitarist's management. As yet unreleased here on CD, it's been issued in Europe with a minimum of sonic disturbance and a high import price that you can avoid if all you want is its peak, "Machine Gun," which is on *Essential Jimi Plays Monterey* (Reprise 25358-2; 45:54: ★★★★★) is half of *Otis Redding/Jimi Hendrix Experience* (Reprise MS 2029) plus "Killing Floor." Now including pre-concert tuneup and Brian Jones' intro as well, it takes Wally Heider's solid 1967 live sound and, as much as is possible, opens its inevitably limited colors.

Released in 1982, *Jimi Hendrix Concerts* (Reprise 22306-2; 77:41: ★★★★★) is a kind of "essential" live album, an expansive-sounding single CD that adds a previously unreleased 1969 live rendition of "Foxy Lady" to what had been a double-LP. Boasting excellent performances and airy sound, it's a must if you want to know how mammoth, how overpowering, how quick-thinking, how funky and blue and soulful Hendrix sounded on stage. The oddly-titled *In The West* (Polydor 230 201-8; 40:43: ★★★★★½) collects variable-quality concert excerpts from the Isle of Wight, Royal Albert Hall, San Diego, and Berkeley that are misspelled and out of order on the cover, but the "Red House" included here is a raunchy, driven asskicker. *Isle Of Wight* (Polydor 831 313-2; 34:08: ★★★) was Hendrix's last concert, marked by out-of-control sounds; not the most satisfying live set but a sentimental favorite.

One of the first digitalized bits of the Hendrix catalog to make big waves, *Live At Winterland* (Rykodisc 20038; 71:45: ★★★★★½) earned its rave reviews by pulling together selections from three nights of concerts in a way that mimicked a typical Hendrix set of that time—basically the U.K. *Are You Experienced?*—with excellent-sounding results. By contrast, *Radio One: The BBC Sessions* (Rykodisc 20078; 59:39: ★★★) is a disappointment. While the sound is fine, the album is a logical mess: it culls a few tunes from five different live performances, all of which have long been out on bootleg in their entirety, and scrambles their order. Why?

Recorded at Royal Albert Hall by Hendrix manager Mike Jeffery for a never-released movie, the single-CD *Experience* soundtrack (Bulldog 40023; 57:24: ★★★★★½) combines

two LPs with little audible change—the sound is still sort of murky and dull by current standards. But *Experience* includes the version of "Little Wing" (here called "Little Ivey") duped on *In The West*, as well as demonstrating Hendrix's frustrated impatience with his audience's unwillingness to accept new material: after a stunning, percussive rendition of "Room Full Of Mirrors," he uncorks a magnificent wall-of-feedback solo. (As just one example of the kind of routine multiplication that afflicts even marginal items in Hendrix's seemingly endless catalog, *Experience* is also available, in a more treble and expensive form, as a gold CD, *The Last Experience Concert*, Zeta 517; 57:21: ★.)

When Hendrix died, he was working on an ambitious double-album, *First Rays Of The New Rising Sun*. *Cry Of Love* (Reprise 2034-2;

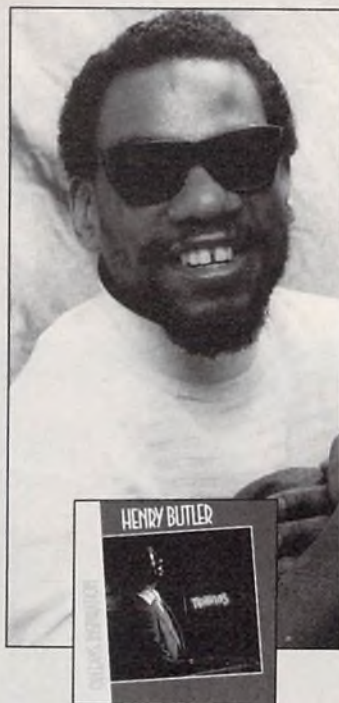


40:02: ★★★★★½), now on CD, and *Rainbow Bridge* (Reprise MS 2040), long out of print, are its two unfinished, out-of-order halves. *Cry* is by turns blues-drenched ache and a dream of escape; three of its cuts are on *Essential*, but if you've read this far, it's worth the dough. Of the other albums now on CD, *War Heroes* (Polydor 813 573-2; 35:03: ★★★★★) is studio takes barely begun or nearly finished at Hendrix's death, so it's like a peak behind the scenes; the CD sounds fine, whether he's goofing on Hank Mancini's theme from *Peter Gunn* or pumping acerbic on "Stepping Stone." *Loose Ends* (Polydor 2310 301; 43:14: ★★★★★½) is just what it says, a collection of outtakes and snippets for the collector. *Crash Landing* (Reprise 2204-2; 30:20: ★★) and *Midnight Lightning* (Polydor) were basic tracks of enormously varying quality later pieced together by Alan Douglas using studio musicians; any resemblance between them and a Hendrix album is coincidental.

The three-CD collection *Live & Unreleased: The Radio Show* (Castle HBCD 100; 197:48: ★★½) is most of the outstanding historical overview broadcast in the U.S. over *Westwood One* a couple of years back; it omits some key aspects of the shows, however, and has already been legally enjoined in the U.K. for using material copyrighted and controlled by A&M and Polydor. Still, it boasts a treasure trove of previously (legitimately) unreleased stuff and good sound, although many tunes are only represented by fragments or used as backing for explanatory voiceovers.

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Produced by Joe Ferry. Dr. John appears courtesy of Warner Brothers Records. © 1990 Windham Hill Productions Inc.

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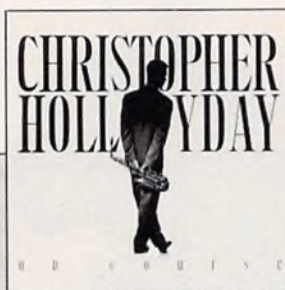
20 years earlier. Among the most astonishing constructions here are the wildly imaginative "Moods In Mambo," "Percussion Discussion," and the haunting, nightmarish "The Children's Hour Of Dream" which, reminiscent of largely composed precursors like the 1957 *Revelations* and the 1940's *Half-Mast Inhibition*, reveal Mingus' love and assimilation of not only the music of Ellington, but Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, and Varese.

Much of Mingus' genius resided in his idiosyncratic sense of structure and his visionary

use of "atonal" melodies and harmonies as a natural extension of expressive possibilities (it's likely that he identified precisely with their unpopular/radical connotations). So, though most of *Epitaph* is densely scored, embracing innovative aspects of polytonality and risky rhythmic devices, there's never a sense of experimentation for sheerly analytical reasons; the music mirrors Mingus' emotions, his feelings, fears, and exhilarations.

Of course, there's a lot of "jazz" to be heard here, too, thanks to substantial solos by Soloff, Marsalis, Brecker, Handy, Hicks, Hanna, et al.

Problems? Some of the "swing" sections sound conducted, due partially, no doubt, to the difficult charts and the unwieldy size of the ensemble. The live recording admits applause and flaws of sonic balance, plus a blooper or two. The order of the movements is dramatically unconvincing and the ending is anticlimactic. In fact, for all its musical persuasiveness, it's hard for Schuller to convince us that this is the way Mingus would have finalized it—though he goes to great pains in his program notes to identify his own editorial and compositional emendations. Still, given the incomplete and disintegrating condition of the score, Schuller's reconstruction is nothing short of miraculous. Let us now hope that this valuable and exciting documentation is not the music's only chance, but its first flowering. (reviewed on CD)  
—Art Lange



## CHRISTOPHER HOLLYDAY

**ON COURSE**—RCA Novus 3087-4-NA: *NO SECOND QUARTER; LADY STREET; MEMORIES OF YOU; HIT AND RUN; WEST SIDE WINDS; SKEPTICAL SPECTICAL; IN A LOVE AFFAIR; THE 6TH WORLD.*

**Personnel:** Hollyday, alto sax; Larry Goldings, piano; John Lockwood, bass; Ron Savage, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

## ALEX DEAN

**BOTH FEET**—Unity 109: *BOTH FEET; TYRELL TYPE TUNE; M. & M.; W.I.C.; FATHOM; THEME FOR BURT; MIRROR IMAGE; BLUES FOR GWEN.*

**Personnel:** Dean, tenor sax; Mike Malone, trumpet; Mark Eisenman, piano; Kieran Overs, bass; Joseph Bendzsa, drums. (49:29 minutes)

★ ★ ★

Be alert to two talented saxophonists hitting a groove. Christopher Hollyday rises to the linear and harmonic challenges of modern jazz styles with a confident authority belying his 20 years. He's a fuzzy-cheeked astonishment who's striving hard to give a personal slant to his reflections of Bird, Trane, Cannonball, Stitt, and other studied-on-records mentors. Meantime, the warm if comparatively unimposing bop/post-bop wind propelled by a 35-year-old tenorman named Alex Dean carries southward from Toronto.

Unlike his four previous albums, Hollyday's *On Course* arrives as testimony of a willful assertion of self. The alto prodigy has finally checked his idolatry (Jackie McLean's recently

been the favorite), and now his more concentrated, bolder tone and sweeping phrases offer evidence of increased individuality. Also, he's flexing newly developed songwriting muscles: six better-than-satisfactory originals attest to his keen interest in harmony. And by recording with talented friends from back home in Boston, the Greenwich Village denizen's freed himself of the unavoidable fidgetiness that cropped up in his work when supported by heavy cats Ron Carter, Billy Higgins, and Cedar Walton on a couple earlier albums. (All three players graced *Reverence* from 1988, only Higgins and Walton made his Novus debut last year.)

*On Course* abounds with the delight the whiz kid typically expresses when executing knotty themes and hurling intelligent lines through changes—check, say, the big-grin "Lady Street," which features young piano wizard Larry Goldings. He now assuredly reveals another side to his character: two ballads—the standard "Memories Of You" and his "Love Affair"—are played with the energetic but tranquil understanding of someone who sincerely felt things in his heart. If Hollyday continues his euphoric and unsentimentally romantic course to selfhood, the DB Hall of Fame awaits him. (reviewed on cassette)

Dean and his group make a rewarding visit with *Both Feet*. The tenor player, currently a Pat La Barbera cohort who's worked with Gil Evans and Rob McConnell, is influenced by Sonny Rollins and Joe Henderson. He crafts solos

that pass beyond routineness for their content, logical development, and scintillating swing. The other Canadians also are good musicians, especially frequent soloist Mike Malone on trumpet, whose phrases bristle with feeling, and pianist Mark Eisenman, who apparently studied Wynton Kelly well. In an appealing program of originals and McCoy Tyner's "Blues For Gwen," the quintet achieves illuminating colors due to astute interplay. One nifty little session. (reviewed on CD)—*Frank-John Hadley*



## BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO

**WHERE THERE'S SMOKE THERE'S FIRE**—Island 842-925: *WHAT YOU GONNA DO*; *BUCK'S HOT ROD*; *HEY GOOD LOOKIN'*; *WE'RE HAVING A PARTY*; *BEAST OF BURDEN*; *BE GOOD OR BE GONE*;

*MAYBE I WILL*; *POUR TOUT QUELQUE'UN*; *WHERE THERE'S SMOKE THERE'S FIRE*; *ROUTE 66*; *IT'S GETTING LATE*.

**Personnel:** Stanley Dural, Jr., accordion, organ, piano, lead vocals; Lee Allen Zeno, bass; Melvin Veazie, guitar; Kevin Menard, drums; Dennis Taylor, tenor sax; Wilbert Willis, rubboard; David Hildalgo, guitar, vocals, drums (cuts 8, 10); Dwight Yoakam, vocal (3); Steve Berlin, baritone sax; Lee Thornburg, trumpet; Mark Linett, tambourine.

★ ★ ★ ★

With the passing of Clifton Chenier, Stanley "Buckwheat" Dural has become the torchbearer of modern zydeco, outstripping older rivals like Rockin' Dopsie and inspiring younger imitators like Nathan Williams (of Nathan and The Zydeco Cha-Chas). Chenier updated the Afro-Cajun music of southwestern Louisiana, adopting the piano accordion in place of the push-button squeezebox and adding Ray Charles-style r&b to the zydeco repertoire. Buckwheat, who originally joined Chenier's band as an organist, pushed the envelope further with funk and rock covers and a pumped-up, party-hearty beat that's made him a campus favorite.

After nearly a dozen albums, Buckwheat's sound has congealed into a formula. Like a good bluesman, though, he can still breathe new life into old licks, and *Where There's Smoke*

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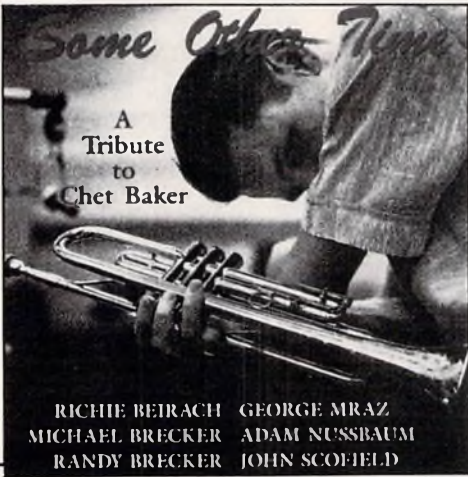
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**JUST DU-ET**

by Owen Cordle

A critic once wrote that a certain jazz pianist often performed with only a bassist for "economic reasons." (He meant that there wasn't enough loot to hire a drummer.) When the pianist's wife read this, she called to chastise the critic: No, it wasn't for economy at all, the pianist just liked duos once in a while.

The three albums reviewed here testify to the viability of the format. Each mesmerizes in the way the sound of the piano and bass creates and sustains a mood.


The **Hank Jones-Red Mitchell Duo** (Timeless CD SJP 283; 50:05 minutes: ★★★★★) is a diamonds & mahogany affair. Richness abounds—the crystalline exposition of Jones' ideas, the woody warmth of Mitchell's walk and interstitial comments. Lovely, swinging, decorous, sensitive—it's all these, plus the melody is never too far removed. Brother Thad's "A Child Is Born" (neat piano embroidery, super-low bass notes holding underneath) takes the ballad prize. "Wee" and "Like Someone In Love" score at faster paces.

*Two Of A Kind* (Theresa TRCD 128; 57:43: ★★★★★) pairs pianist **John Hicks** and bassist **Ray Drummond**, a more ecstatic, lushly swinging duo than Jones-Mitchell. Hicks gives a hint of Bill Evans in his chord voicings, but he swings harder and pulls you along more sweepingly. The firmness and texture of Drummond's sound suggests another Ray—Brown, that is. The piano leads, the bass supports: this is the feeling of this duo, as distinguished from the equality of Jones-Mitchell. The tunes are standards (e.g., "I'll Be Around," "Come Rain Or Come Shine," "Without A Song"), the performances seductive.




Drummond shows up with **Bill Mays** on *One To One* (DMP CD-473; 53:40: ★★★★★), where there is more give-and-take interplay than on the Hicks CD. The spirit of Evans, Denny Zeitlin, Paul Bley, and Keith Jarrett haunts Mays' touch and voicings. His transitions are interesting, from cranky to splashy to abstract and impressionistic. Except for a couple of the pianist's originals, the tunes are familiar, including Evans' "Interplay," "Stella By Starlight," and "Just You, Just Me." This is the thinker's kind of duo. (all reviewed on CD)

DB



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*There's Fire* throbs with raw energy. Produced by David Hidalgo of Los Lobos, it features cameos by Hidalgo and country crooner Dwight Yoakam, who harmonizes sweetly on the Hank Williams classic, "Hey Good Lookin'." But Buckwheat and his glove-tight band don't really need help, charging even generic cross-over tunes and routine roadhouse jams with potent vocals, wicked dance beats, and razor-sharp solos.

Buckwheat's music is unfailingly soulful—he once led a 15-piece soul band called the Hitchhikers—and here he nods to James Brown (on "We're Having A Party") and Booker T. (on "Maybe I Will"). He also squeezes gumbo-soul juice out of the Rolling Stones' "Beast Of Burden" and rolls down "Route 66" with one eye on the Stones' version and the other on Nat King Cole's original. He plays one track each on acoustic piano and Hammon B3 organ but swings hardest on accordion, where Hidalgo's drums snap like a two-ton crawfish. (reviewed on cassette)

—Larry Birnbaum



## JOHN FAHEY

**GOD, TIME AND CAUSALITY**—Shanachie 97006: REVELATION; THE RED PONY; LION; MEDLEY: INTERLUDE/THE PORTLAND CEMENT FACTORY/REQUIEM FOR MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT; MEDLEY: SNOWFLAKES/STEAMBOAT 'GWINE AROUND THE BEND/DEATH OF THE CLAYTON PEACOCK/HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY; MEDLEY: SANDY ON EARTH/I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS. (56:56 minutes)  
**Personnel:** Fahey, guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

This is a wonderful album. If you like your acoustic steel-string guitar both eclectic and traditional, John Fahey just might be your man. Thirty-odd years of playing and recording a trailblazing mixture of country blues, bluegrass, psychedelia, folk, Indian ragas, you name it, has forever changed the way this reviewer hears the guitar, not to mention the impact Fahey's made on such acoustic genre-splicers as Leo Kottke.

*God, Time And Causality* comes across as a kind of return to roots, thanks in part to the various medleys. New delights can be found on such well-worn backroads as "Lion" (from *The Yellow Princess*), as Fahey at turns rambles then dwells with an easygoing blues sandwiched by a bristling jig of sorts. Or take "Steamboat 'Gwine Around The Bend" and "Requiem For Mississippi John Hurt" (both to be found in slightly different form on *Of Rivers And Religion*, "Requiem" doubling for "Funeral

Song"): the majesty of Fahey's technique and melodic construction appear even stronger, more pristine in their present form; like a fine wine, these tunes carry the richness and full-bodied feel only time can provide.

The sound of Fahey's guitar is clean, clear, the steel strings ringing out like trumpets on a battlefield, his fingering almost at one with the notes, the deep, rich tones rounding out his orchestra of sounds. And his Hawaiian-style (lap-top) bottleneck on the "Bottleneck Medley" has more Delta than Diamond Head. For guitar players, there's a 15-page booklet, complete with liner notes (reprinted from the album jacket) and sheet music of "Requiem" and "Steamboat," just in case you can't believe your ears.

Listening to this music puts me on the farm I never knew, the hillside or meadow I visit ne'er too often, amidst the swarming beehive of cosmic reorientation visited on rare occasions. Fahey's commitment to a kind of stylistic blend of Delta blues with hillbilly and classical overtones rings true on *God, Time And Causality*; an album of music that showcases an American original. And yes, there's the pose and wry humor, found, for example, in the source of the album's title: says Fahey in the liner notes, "It's just a joke from a former philosophy major." Oh yeah? (reviewed on CD) —John Ephland



## TONY WILLIAMS

**NATIVE HEART**—Blue Note CDP 7 93170 2: NATIVE HEART; CITY OF LIGHTS; EXTREME MEASURES; JUICY FRUIT; TWO WORLDS; CRYSTAL PALACE; LIBERTY (CD only). (51:21 minutes)

**Personnel:** Williams, drums; Wallace Roney, trumpet; Bill Pierce, tenor and soprano saxes; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Ira Coleman (cuts 1, 2, 6), Bob Hurst (3-5), bass.

★ ★ ★ ★

## WALLACE RONEY

**THE STANDARD BEARER**—Muse MCD 5372: THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT; I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TIME IT WAS; DON'T BLAME ME; CON ALMA; GIANT STEPS; WHEN YOUR LOVER HAS GONE; LOOSE. (43:50)

**Personnel:** Roney, trumpet; Gary Thomas, tenor sax (3,6,7); Mulgrew Miller, piano; Charnett Moffett, bass; Cindy Blackman, drums; Steve Berrios, percussion (7).

★ ★ ★ ½

Fusion wasn't always very good to him, but Tony Williams has shown himself to be a key

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## SONIC FICTION

Together, their music is easier characterized than described, since the wealth of colors, moods, textures, and melodies is fluid enough to shift not only from piece to piece, but moment to moment. There is, for me, a European aesthetic at work here, a blend of modern and historic sources with the added bittersweet spice of folk elements from the soil. It's a delicate, demanding juggling act, drawing on past experiences while remaining alert and honest to the immediacy of this particular moment. Their intuitive tactics are frequently breathtaking, as they simultaneously shadow each other's moves, suggest spontaneous new directions, and exist as an individual: Reijseger etching deft melodic contours out of the merest effects at times, Hemingway exhorting and embellishing, Gräwe—with a crisp clarity of articulation, complete rhythmic flexibility, and an ear for piano sonorities, plus a resolute insistence on building block foundations—instilling structural support and lyrical alterations.

There's irony in the title, *Sonic Fiction*; because music this immediate, this intuitive yet integrated is not a science, and fictive to the point of being invented by the imagination, but not feigned. The intricacy of movement, design, and detail they create is a joy and a pleasure. That's a fact.

—Art Lange  
November 1989

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**WOMEN LEANING ON THEIR MEN**

by Fred Bouchard

**D**iamonds may be a girl's best friend, but the women singers in this assemblage of CDs know that their musicians set their vocal gems off best. We hear a lot these days about women who stand by their men, but the women singing here have the presence of mind to lean on their guys for a little extra support: arranging, soloing, highlighting, underlining. Whether divas of dipsydoodle like Betty Carter and Dee Dee Bridgewater or writer/players like Jude Swift and Meredith D'Ambrosio, their taste and experience lead them to choose sidemen carefully—more compatriots than accompanists—to really complement and complete the date.

**Sathima Bea Benjamin's *Lovelight*** (Enja R2-79605; 45:31 minutes: ★★★★★½) invariably enhances her intimate, caressing performances of very personal material (here her strong bonding with beloved women: Winnie Mandela, her mother and grandmother) by working with top-notch sidemen. Calm, focused, and loving is Sathima. The wife of pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, Sathima really works with her husband; her personal expatriate visions of South Africa work admirably as refracted through the sensibilities of handpicked New York players. This time, Sathima luxuriates amid lovely tapestries woven by pianist Larry Willis, bassist Buster Williams, and drummer Billy Higgins, with bold brocades stitched in by tenorman Ricky Ford.

Sadly missing from the stateside scene since her amazing vocals with Heiner Stadler, the Jones/Lewis Big Band, and her Tony-winning appearance in *The Wiz* in the 1970s, **Dee Dee Bridgewater** re-emerges like a woman possessed on *Live In Paris* (MCA 6331: ★★★★★½). Bridgewater kindles a blazing bravura performance at one of Europe's hippest clubs, New Morning. Her game French trio (pianist Hervé Sellin plays Fool to her Lear) has to run to keep up as she absolutely commandeers a Gospel-drenched, Wilsonian clutch of standards. With an ethereal "Misty," show-stopping "On A Clear Day," and a topper "Dr. Feelgood," the regal Ms. B. lets 50 million French and the rest of us know that she is decisively back. (reviewed on LP)

**Betty Carter's *Whatever Happened To Love?*** (Verve 835 683-2; 52:46: ★★★★★) is a reissue that picks up her live 1982-'83 Betcar release with a typically *simpatico* trio and four sumptuous string arrangements (less muddily recorded than on LP) that she commissioned and sang at Brooklyn Academy of the Arts and Boston Symphony Hall (see *DB* "News" Feb. '84). Carter's legendary ear for excellent sidemen was in evidence with this crack band of pianist Khalid Moss, bassist Curtis Lundy, and drummer Lewis Nash. Betty's guys must be alert for her drop-of-the-hat time shifts, dropout cadenzas, pickups.



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Betty Carter

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everything. Her grace swoops and coos with unusual delicacy afloat strings on "Cocktails For Two," spars with harp and Moss on "With No Words," tacks and yaws breezily with (distant) alto saxophonist Jerry Dodgion on "Everytime We Say Goodbye." Aesthetics beat out finances on this chance-taking project. Betty reveled in the music, and so can we.

On *Sings Rodgers, Hart & Hammerstein* (Concord Jazz CCD-4405; 51:24: ★★★), **Rosemary Clooney** still belts 'em with her stolid Italian matron's good nature—wadda suviva! She's showing a harder edge and fatter vibrato lately, but no more penchant for getting beyond her hallmark four-square readings. The L.A. "Jazz" Choir may sound a bit hokey, and charts by pianist John Oddo square, but fine sidemen pull Rosie through. Trumpeter Jack Sheldon (who sings a typically wacky mile-wide-smile duet with her on "People Will Say We're In Love") plays several warm, winning solos, as does trombonist Chauncey Welsh. Tenorman Scott Hamilton, like Rosie, unveils his distinctive tone and baronial mien but, sadly, little (of Sheldon's) mother wit.

With *South To A Warmer Place* (Sunnyside SSC 1039D; 64:54: ★★★★★), **Meredith d'Ambrosio** is like lavender: traditional, fragrant, and durable. Her constant affection for America's more subtle and unsung pop tunes is finally paying off: this could be the cool, clear-eyed semi-discovered singer's best yet, though this time (ironically) she cedes starpower guests for smooth *copaceticas* with new hubby Eddie Higgins (a sure pianist celebrated in his native Chicago, adopted Florida, and lately Cape Cod). D'Ambrosio's painstakingly cultivated repertoire and comfortable execution of our national treasure of Tin Pan Alley not-so-classics does all musicians a great service. She reads composers from Clare Fischer to Cahn & Fain with blissful understanding. Lou Colombo shines on gorgeous muted trumpet spots. Crystalline production. This cabaret griot makes learning old tunes fun.

**Karin Krog**, Norway's best known jazz singer for 25 years, has a winning way with her warm, curly-voweled delivery. Krog draws good musicians to her: on *Freestyle* (Odin) she goes one-on-one with old pal

John Surman's reeds, synthesizer, and experimental charts; on *Something Borrowed, Something New* (Meantime MR2; 58:53: ★★★½) she works hand-in-glove through standards with 20-year Copenhagen redoubtables: pianist Kenny Drew, "NHØP" Pedersen on bass, drummer Alex Riel. Krog has nice balance and relaxed swing (so youthful still!), and these guys highlight the best in her.

*A Song For You* (Storyville STCD-4147; 46:24: ★★★½) is an **Anita O'Day** program from a 1975 Trio (Japan) reissue; then 56, she sounds a little shaky but still game and crazy. Lispy and fragile, tenuous as Lady Day and twice as mannered in her phrasing, O'Day can be depended upon to flare up on great tunes (cheery, convincing "Undecided" and "Opus One" recall her big band days) and sport a fine band. Ronnell Bright! He's been pianist and arranger for Carmen (1954-'55), Sarah (1958-'60), Nancy (1964-'67), and Lena: why not Anita? He plays like his name, limpid and light, while reedman Don Raffel sounds half asleep. Don Poole—O'Day's manager and companion—keeps an eagle eye from the drumkit.

**Patty Peterson's** *The More I See You* (Celebration 5020; 40:31: ★★★) shows a full-throated, often excitable singer from Minneapolis fronting a most complementary quartet, with brother Billy (bass, arrangements) and a few guest spots by Ira Sullivan on reeds or trumpet. I like her forthright sexiness and spunk, though she's inclined to howl on ballads. She delivers well-paced standards with nice twists. "Nature Boy" is feverishly modal with her hearty, trombonish voice counterpointed by Sullivan's Trane song.

**Jude Swift**, our lone singer/songwriter, on her *Music For Your Neighborhood* (Nova 8917-2; 38:17: ★★★½) comes up bright and bouncy, meticulously enunciating her facile lyrics with a kinky bent. Touches à la Laurie Anderson salt her sassy, ingenuous lyrics: metronomic phase loops and voiceovers mix nicely with pleasing voice and the tasty soprano saxophone of Brandon Fields. Swift may turn bittersweet classics ("Lover Man," "Love For Sale") into milk-chocolate bon-bons, but they're pure and organic. Resourceful, witty, and charming, Swift benefits from variegated charts by Rich Rutenberg, her co-arranger/producer/C7-ist.

On *Jumpworld* (JMT 834 434-2; 52:48: ★★★★★), **Cassandra Wilson** exposes herself as a breakthrough stylist for the '90s. Pianist Rod Williams' torrid chartings into reggae, funk, and rap show off Wilson's haunting voice and set up her unique ideas. Her lyrics mesmerize and jolt, melding Tracy Chapman's compassion with Joni Mitchell's savvy acerbity. Around a taut quartet (Williams, David Gilmore's guitar, K. B. Harris' bass, Mark Johnson's drums) spring sterling guest spots (reedmen: Greg Osby, Gary Thomas, sometime collaborator Steve Coleman). I hear Wilson as one of today's most steamy, ear-stretching, and provocative singers. (all reviewed on CD except where noted)

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

figure in the revival of the contemporary jazz mainstream. Williams' fourth album in an acoustic vein and within a classic quintet format adds to the body of work he has built on since the mid-'80s, without particularly delving into new terrain.

Which is by no means a qualification. The obviously eclectic Williams now displays a genuine sense of focus; his writing—from "Native Heart" on through to "Liberty," a fiery drum solo—boasts a concerted intelligence and his playing a subtle propulsive elan. To wit: he seems to be mastering the concept of band-

leading. And the band is something to write home about. Smartly tailored, waste-not want-not solos mark the playing of saxist Pierce and trumpeter Roney (a charter member, along with the brilliant post-McCoy Tyneresque Miller on piano). Bassists Coleman and Hurst are finely-tooled pistons.

With his able band, Williams is going after a striking, familiar-but-fresh sound here, reminiscent of Art Blakey, but informed by the peripatons of a different drummer who can go home again.

Roney's own well-studied and fertile playing shines mightily on his third solo release for

Muse; he's an unabashed trumpet lion at a time when Wynton M. has harnessed his hubris in favor of a cooler prevailing head. In all, Roney's ardent style and the young heat machine along with him make for a standards set to savor.

On the rugged workout of Coltrane's "Giant Steps," Roney issues tumbling flurries of notes—bumblebee bop—in tandem with Thomas. Grace is less the point of the exercise than momentum; the reverse is true with the poised lyricism of the following cut, "When Your Lover Has Gone." And for icing, the closing "Loose" is an improvised capper which finds Roney firing away atop percussive scattershot, no real book in sight.

Young players often besiege the standards turf with a case to make, a score to prove. For Roney et al., there's nothing to prove, only a tradition to uphold and polish. That task is handled with care and fire. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard

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### JOHN MAYALL

**A SENSE OF PLACE**—Island 842 795: I WANT TO GO; CONGO SQUARE; SEND ME DOWN TO VICKSBURG; WITHOUT HER; SENSITIVE KIND; JACKSBORO HIGHWAY; LET'S WORK TOGETHER; I CAN'T COMPLAIN; BLACK CAT MOAN; SUGARCANE: ALL MY LIFE.

**Personnel:** Mayall, vocals, harmonica, and piano; Coco Montoya, Cid Sanchez, Debbie Davies, guitar; Sonny Landreth, slide guitar; Steve Cohn, piano; Freebo, Bobby Haynes, Tim Drummond, bass; Joe Yuele, drums; Walfredo Reyes, percussion.

★ ★ ★

British bluesman John Mayall was one of the original forces behind the blues-rock movement of the 1960's; a dubious distinction, perhaps, but there's no denying that he introduced a lot of people to music they might otherwise have missed. This recording, Mayall's first in some time (with a new edition of the Bluesbreakers), shows that his abilities are undiminished. It also calls into question how much newness there is left in the style he helped create (see p. 24).

Mayall's at his best when least forced. "Send Me Down To Vicksburg" is a rollicking Cripple Clarence Lofton-style piano boogie that fades out all too soon; conversely, "Congo Square" tries too hard to be evocative, is lyrically sloppy (they talk about "gris-gris," not "mojo," in New Orleans), and ends up missing its own point.

Throughout, Mayall's harp playing is robust in the wide-toned, warbling Chicago style. The band is generally unobtrusive; only occasion-

ally do they descend into ponderous blues-rock overbashing. Sometimes they're effectively raunchy: "Jacksboro Highway," a Kerouacian evocation of the wild mystery of the American night in a tawdry Texas red-light district, is a slow-grinding, minor-key rocker lightened by Mayall's wide-chording harp. Likewise, "Black Cat Moan," although somewhat incongruous in its use of Delta imagery to describe the ennui of a homesick British blues star, effectively echoes the classic Blues-breaker blues-rock fusion experiments of the 1960's.

But the most compelling track is the least bluesy: J. J. Cale's "Sensitive Kind" is a lovely, minor-key ballad buoyed by willowy acoustic slide guitar and imbued with mournful passion. The lyrics are a moving and rare testimonial to masculine tenderness. It shows that Mayall is capable of exploring new directions with sensitivity and imagination. We look forward to further forays like this. (reviewed on cassette)

—David Whiteis



## PHIL WOODS

**FLASH**—Concord Jazz CCD-4408: *JOURNEY TO THE CENTER; WEAVER; AUTUMN NOCTURNE; RADO; DR. DUNK; FLASH; BRADLEY'S REVENGE; MISIRLOU; EBULLITION.* (62:51 minutes)

**Personnel:** Woods, alto sax, clarinet; Tom Harrell, trumpet, flugelhorn; Hal Crook, trombone (cuts 6-9); Hal Galper, piano; Steve Gilmore, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

You think you've heard most of what Woods has to say, yet he keeps coming up with compelling performances. Part of it is his delivery, the swaggering sense of bebop time. Part of it is the tone—by turns seductive, vinegary, growling. Another part is his ability to build a solo, one idea leading logically but not predictably to the next.

Then there's his band, which is idiomatically part of him. This CD catches the band in transition, Harrell still aboard on all tracks, Crook (who has replaced him in the working band) added on the last four tracks.

As solid as the quintet cuts are, the sextet cuts have an extra dimension. The ensemble color possibilities of three horns take us away from the classic bebop sound of alto and trumpet. "Misirlou," for example, with Woods on clarinet, suggests Ellington-like exotica. And "Ebullition" conjures up both the Jazz Messengers and the Lighthouse All-Stars. The alto solo here pays surprise tribute to Ornette Coleman.

In Crook, Woods has a trombonist who

combines the slide features of the instrument with the trip-hammer articulation of bop. He's very impressive, and he has been writing a lot for the new quintet. The match with Harrell doesn't produce jealousy, rather complementary art.

Harrell and the rhythm section are typically articulate throughout. Galper comes across as a perfect mirror of Woods' style (e.g., "Journey") and as one of the few pianists who can capture the feeling of both Bill Evans and Thelonious Monk without seeming contrived. Gilmore has a good Scott LaFaro-esque solo on "Weaver" and Goodwin revisits Max Roach and Roy Haynes on the title cut. (reviewed on CD)

—Owen Cordle



## JOHN SCOFIELD

**TIME ON MY HANDS**—Blue Note CDP 7 92894 2: *WABASH III; SINCE YOU ASKED; SO SUE ME; LET'S SAY WE DID; FLOWER POWER; STRANGER TO THE LIGHT; NOCTURNAL MISSION; FARMACOLOGY; TIME AND TIDE; BE HEAR NOW; FAT LIP.* (63:22 minutes)

**Personnel:** Scofield, guitar; Joe Lovano, saxophones; Charlie Haden, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## JOHN ABERCROMBIE

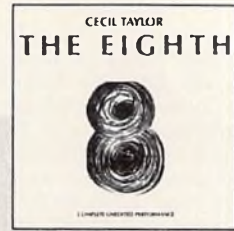
**ANIMATO**—ECM 841 779-2: *RIGHT NOW; SINGLE MOON; AGITATO; FIRST LIGHT; LAST LIGHT; FOR HOPE OF HOPE; BRIGHT REIGN; OLLIE MENTION.* (44:21)

**Personnel:** Abercrombie, guitar, guitar synthesizer; John Christensen, drums, percussion; Vince Mendoza, synthesizers.

★ ★ ★

These two Johns have been at the forefront of expanding guitar for the last decade-plus, and are long among the leaders of contemporary jazz. They share a Berklee background, and have played with many of the same musicians. But although Abercrombie has had the pleasure of Jack DeJohnette's sticksmanship numerous times over the years, Scofield had never played with the drumming giant before *Time On My Hands*.

The affair really works. Scofield's "Let's Say We Did" is a work of art, beautiful and witty like a Shorter composition. "Flower Power" has a life of its own, a lovely rhythm that would be there in force from the strength and conviction of the guitarist's playing alone. But Haden and DeJohnette insist on transporting it to a land of their own. Haden's constant shifts between double, straight, and half-time on "Stranger To



## CECIL TAYLOR

**THE EIGHTH**—hat Art 2036: *CALLING IT THE 8TH I-III; CALLING IT THE 9TH.*

**Personnel:** Taylor, Bösendorfer piano; Jimmy Lyons, alto saxophone; William Parker, bass; Rashid Bakr, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

*The Eighth* is the complete 1982 Freiburger Jazztage performance from which an edited version, *Calling It The 8th* (hat Musics 3508), was released in 1983. Since this is the only recording issued to date of a particularly striking edition of Taylor's Unit, the release of *The Eighth* reconfirms the shamefully inadequate documentation of a national musical treasure.

It is understandable that Gary Giddins should, in his *Village Voice* review, suggest that producer Werner Uehlinger be questioned for his handling of this material; few of Taylor's listeners can afford to indulge in the redundancy of both sets. But what, then, would Giddins prescribe for American producers, whose reissue programs he consistently praises, for failing to record new Taylor material for almost a decade? The handling of this excellent concert recording, apparently a mixture of marketing convenience and an archival urge, is somewhat beside the point. The point is that we only had to wait three years for the original, a mere wink of the eye in the reissue racket.

The edited version of *Calling It The 8th* proves to be less of a cut-and-paste proposition than expected, the only excision being approximately 25 minutes following the opening vocal chant. Taylor's extended trio passage, which details his rigorous rapport with William Parker and Rashid Bakr, actually succeeds another, more lightning-paced exposition, that is sandwiched by two arguably definitive Jimmy Lyons solos. Still, the editing radically altered the piece's structure, and truncated Lyons' central role.

Both albums have the unedited performance of *Calling It The 9th*, which now seems like a tentative afterthought. Despite its appreciable qualities (including fits-and-starts cadences, plaintive melodic contours, and ruminative pacing), its 11-minute duration is barely time for the Unit to bring the material to the boiling point. As demonstrated by *Calling It The 8th*, it is somewhere beyond this boiling point that Taylor's most potent magic takes hold.

With the untimely death of Jimmy Lyons—a loss that becomes greater with time—*The Eighth* assumes larger proportions. His energy and invention is boundless on this recording, and the restoration of his aforementioned solos is reason enough to seek this album out. Hopefully, hat Art will reissue the remainder of its sizable portion of Lyons' work as a leader, as well.

—bill shoemaker

MAY 1987 DOWN BEAT 27  
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The Light" provide the riddle while Scofield throws up his web. Later, the drummer's part dissolves into a mass of curves and angles under Lovano's searching tenor. The young saxman emerges unscathed from the skirmish. "Wabash III" rings with Scofield's earthy, folksy twang. "Farmacology" is the real burner of the set, Scofield his usual fluid self, thinking fast on his feet, sometimes purposefully falling a split second behind the charging Jack, setting him up for the next barrage. DeJohnette's interpretation of the final romp through the head is wonderful. On "Time And Tide" (one of three extra CD tracks) he displays cunning polyrhythms and feathery light touch. Coproduced by Scofield and Peter Erskine, this set shows just how far the guitarist has come.

Abercrombie's *Animato* is largely the compositions of synthesist Vince Mendoza, with exceptions being the guitar-synth showcase "Bright Reign" (lovely voices, but going where?) and "Right Now," which builds a Glenn Branca-like drone over which co-composer Christensen lays a typical ECM cymbal blanket. Abercrombie shows his good chops with some lightning runs, but the overall effect is also sort of aimless. It's really the third song, Mendoza's "Agitato," that delivers the wake-up call. "Last Light" is also a fun tune, upbeat for this collection, with some logical and interesting development. But too much of *Animato* sounds like idle new-age noodling from some ECM cathedral. Abercrombie has certainly taken a different path from his 1988 release

*Getting There* (with Michael Brecker, Marc Johnson, and Erskine) or the earlier *Current Events*. It's a moody piece of work, less of a "playing" record. *Animato* makes lovely film music, but doesn't translate to my favorite Abercrombie. More of a compositional effort from the guitarist may be needed next time for the proper focus. More John in the mix, please. (reviewed on CD) —Robin Tolleson

clarinet; David Torn, guitar; Dean Johnson, bass; Michael Shrieve, drums and percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

This solo debut by the founder of the Everyman Band, a free-fusion outfit that released two distinctive albums on ECM in the early '80s, finds the renegade reedman taking his usual risks in a program that juxtaposes serenity with aggression.

Much of the serenity comes in the form of Fogel's lyrical playing, as on the soothing samba of "Zavanna," a showcase for his soprano, or the tenor ballad showcase, "Never Said Goodbye." The aggression comes in the form of David Torn's sonic assaults on guitar.

This album, comprised of four Fogel original pieces, four group improvisations, and one cover (Don Cherry's "Guinea," fueled here by Shrieve's rock backbeat), represents some of Torn's best playing on record. In the past few years (since his disappointing 1987 effort on ECM, *Cloud About Mercury*), Torn has gone beyond being "the poor man's Bill Frisell" and has emerged with a strong, distinctive voice of his own. Throughout the album he provides ominous-sounding chordal clusters and ethereal sound clouds from his imposing rack of effects, which serve to set the sonic terrain of rubato soundscapes like "Through The Screen" and the gentle trio piece, "Luminous."

On the album's most subversive number, a bit of sonic shock therapy entitled "Unlikely Beast Slayer," Torn's guitar has an underwater,



## MARTY FOGEL

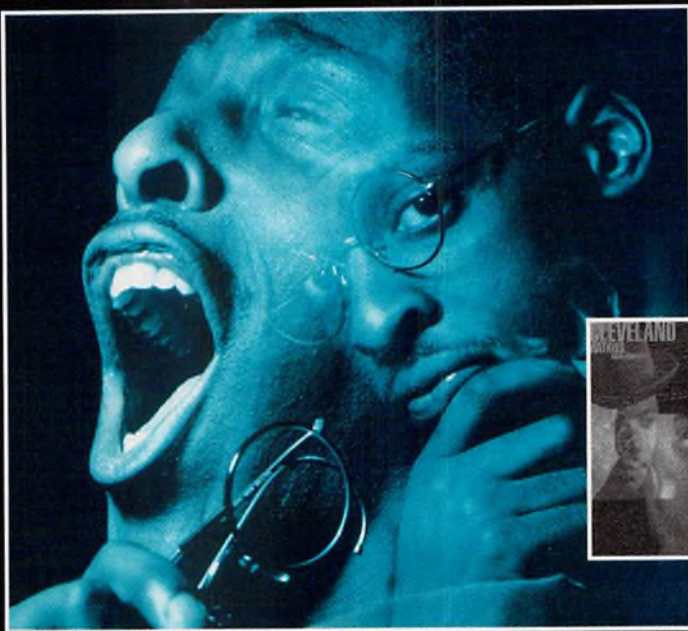
**MANY BOBBING HEADS, AT LAST . . .** —  
CMP CD 37: ZAVANNA; GUINEA; THROUGH THE SCREEN; OWASCO; NEVER SAID GOODBYE; UNLIKELY BEAST SLAYER; LAND OF GIANTS; LUMINOUS; COOL IT. (47:08 minutes)

**Personnel:** Fogel, tenor and soprano saxes,



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dreamstate quality while Fogel blows with intensity and fluidity on tenor. And on the mock-jazz of "Cool It," propelled by Dean Johnson's walking bass and Shrieve's swinging ride cymbal action, Torn kicks on all the effects for an otherworldly take on the blues while Fogel plays it rather straightforward on tenor.

Johnson, a Gary Peacock protégé, balances Torn's electro-onslaughts with rich, round tones on upright bass. His solo on "Land Of Giants" and his choice of notes on the spacious "Through The Screen" show a bassist with taste, ingenuity, and a sense of economy. Johnson provides the warmth against Torn's steely edge. (reviewed on CD) —*Bill Milkowski*



## BILL COSBY AND FRIENDS

**WHERE YOU LAY YOUR HEAD**—Polygram/Verve 841 930-2: *URSALINA*; *WHERE YOU LAY YOUR HEAD*; *MOUTH OF THE BLOWFISH*; *FOUR QUEENS AND A KING*; *WHY IS IT I CAN NEVER FIND ANYTHING IN THE CLOSET (IT'S LONG BUT IT'S ALRIGHT)*. (43:57 minutes)

**Personnel:** Harold Mabern (cuts 1,2), Sonny Bravo (3,4), Don Pullen (5), keyboards; John Scofield (1-4), Sonny Sharrock (5), guitar; Odeon Pope (1,2), David Murray (3,4), Harold Vick (5), tenor sax; Stu Gardner (2-4), synthesizer; Mark Egan, bass; Al Foster (1-4), Jack DeJohnette (5), drums; Bill Cosby (2,4,5), percussion.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

America's most popular comedian has been a passionate jazz fan since his youth. On *Where You Lay Your Head*, Bill Cosby plays the producer/composer role as catalyst and cheerleader.

Cosby, of course, is no recording novice: his comedy albums have been chart-topping best sellers. But a little-known jazz album for MCA in 1968, *Bunion Bradford's Funeral Parlor Marching Band*, came and went with barely a whisper (justifiably, according to Cosby himself). That was before Cosby's visibility skyrocketed. Today, this amateur drummer/percussionist/composer has lent jazz his awesome media status and become one of the world's foremost jazz advocates. This album, the first in a series for Verve, takes that advocacy a big step further.

Comedy and jazz improvisation share certain essentials: impeccable timing, emotional expressiveness, and dynamic storytelling. These qualities appear only intermittently throughout the album—but with enough substance to warrant several listenings. And though Cosby came up with the sounds of

'50s and '60s jazz, this record is thoroughly contemporary, with wide-ranging rhythms and a tasteful use of synthesizers. But Cosby's loose compositions (blues-based snippets, for the most part) would hardly hang together without the abundance of talent present here. His ploys as a producer—his choice of personnel and insistence on an intimate live session—worked. Throughout the various personnel changes, sparks continue to fly.

"Four Queens And A King" is the strongest track, with "Why Is It I Can Never Find Anything In The Closet" a close second. "Four Kings," which alternates an Afro-Latin vamp with a blues interlude, shows Scofield and Murray at their most limber, stretching simultaneously for depth and frenzy, aided by Foster and Egan steadily percolating underneath. "Why Is It" is a bluesy tour de force, introduced by Vick's lusty tenor, countered by a futuristic Scofield, and later by Don Pullen, who thunders in from out of nowhere. Throughout, Cosby & Co. are obviously having a great time.

With *Where You Lay Your Head*, Cosby jumped in at the top. Working with a meatier and more familiar repertoire might well help him solidify his musical direction, while still providing plenty of room to explore. Apparently, that is in fact his next move: Volume Two of the Bill Cosby Jazz Series will be a collection of standards. Who knows? He may even earn himself a second bin in record stores—this time, in the jazz department. (reviewed on CD) —*Stephanie Stein*

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# blindfold test

## 1 LENNY PICKETT.

**"Landscape" (from Lenny Pickett With The Borneo Horns, Carthage) Pickett, E<sup>b</sup> clarinet and tenor sax; Steve Elson, soprano sax; Stan Harrison, alto sax; Dave Barger, trombone; Laurie Frink, Nelson Bogart, trumpet; Howard Johnson, BB<sup>b</sup> tuba.**

When he hit that high harmonic, I knew—Lenny Pickett. He's a wonderful player. There's another track on that album where he plays tenor, E<sup>b</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>, bass, and BB<sup>b</sup> contrabass, alto and bass flutes—it's just phenomenal. This is a nice theme and it kept developing. It reminded me of a circus, a procession. The piece kept opening up and then went into the solo. It was like a parade, and all of a sudden this guy ran to the front and started playing. It was a nice surprise. He was taking part sectionally, but not as a lead voice at the beginning of the tune. I'll give it 4 stars. The control he has on the instrument is phenomenal—that high register. I've heard stories that when he wakes up in the morning he puts one of those hard dog balls in his mouth and chews on it to strengthen his chops.

## 2 GARY THOMAS AND SEVENTH QUADRANT.

**"Pads" (from Code Violations, Enja) Thomas, tenor sax; Paul Bollenback, guitar synth; Tim Murphy, keyboards; Anthony Cox, bass; Steve Williams, drums.**

Ooohhh. This is my saxophone player of the '90s: Gary Thomas. He's brilliant. He's using the Pitchrider. I find it kind of strange to use in an acoustic situation, but it's a real good idea because you can have a line tracking with you, with a slight delay. Gary's playing it well. It sounds like he plays guitar lines. I'd like to ask him if he ever played guitar. I saw him with Jack DeJohnette at NorthSea, and he really is, as you say, awesome. His sound is getting much more solid now. And I love Anthony Cox. That's a nice groove as well. Five stars, for originality, for concept. For potential he gets 10. He's playing some dangerous music.

## 3 PHIL WOODS.

**"Hallucinations" (from The Phil Woods Quartet Volume One, Clean Cuts) Woods, alto sax; Steve Gilmore, bass; Mike Melillo, piano; Bill Goodwin, drums.**

Is it Phil Woods? What made me think maybe it wasn't Phil Woods was there was no trumpet, no Tom Harrell. Phil Woods is a phenomenal alto player, with a great sound. I know there is a Phil Woods sound, but it really seems like he's trying to go for the Charlie Parker thing. And he's never going to be as great as Bird. Not to take anything away from Phil or musicians of that calibre,

## COURTNEY PINE

by Robin Tolleson

Courtney Pine was the king bee among jazzmen buzzing out of the U.K. several years back, and he's carried the "Afro-classical" banner high. In fifth grade in London, Pine took up clarinet because he had a crush on a music teacher. A Sonny Rollins album cover (*Way Out West*) and a BBC appearance by Grover Washington, Jr., got him interested in tenor. Then came Coltrane, circular breathing, and then musical differences of opinion with the leaders of reggae bands he worked with.

Pine co-founded the Abibi Jazz Arts, searching for a style with other young black Britishers. After some "sitting in," he got a call to join Charlie Watts' big band, played on an album with The Jazz Warriors in England, and made appearances with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and Elvin Jones before taking off on his own (see *DB* Sept. '88).

Pine was born on March 16, 1964, the son of a carpenter from Blue Mountain, Jamaica. His first album, *Journey To The Urge Within* (1986), a fresh blend of progressive bebop, the ska he grew up

but if you hold onto somebody's style for such a long time and all you do is play that style, then it must become automatic. I'll give that one 4 for performance, but then it didn't really move me very much. Three stars, but he's a great alto player.

**4 BEN WEBSTER. "Nuff Said" (from ALTERNATE AND INCOMPLETE TAKES—THE HORN, Circle) Webster, tenor sax; Oran Page, trumpet; Clyde Hart, piano; Charlie Drayton, bass; Denzil Best, drums.**

Ben Webster. You know it's something to play at this tempo, to have that kind of control. You've got this drawn-out time, and you'd think there would be more holes in the tapestry, but he has a way of covering all the pockets. That would get 10 stars out of 5. That's just a lesson, because it's so understated, so relaxed. It seems so easy to do that, a lot of players would just ignore it. When he played there you could sight-read, but then to actually play it with that kind of conviction at that tempo is something else. The way he bent the notes and stuff. A lot of this is being cut off from young players now, like Lester Young, Ben Webster—that whole era has kind of been pushed out. The Paul Gonsalves thing, the kind of tenor playing where you're playing slow tunes with that kind of control. It's



CHIEL VAN DER HEYDEN

with, and the melody of the West Indies, put him on the musical map. Delfeayo Marsalis produced *Destiny's Song & The Image of Pursuance* and his latest, *A Vision's Tale* (all on Antilles, see "Record & CD Reviews" May '90). The tenorman dove into his first Blindfold Test, often on the edge of his seat listening, laughing out loud when he couldn't quite determine someone's identity, gasping at musical heights, his eyes like sponges, absorbing and growing ever wider.

very easy to play "Giant Steps" as fast as you can. But to be able to play so much with so few notes, there's an art to that as well.

**5 WAYNE SHORTER. "Ana Maria" (from NATIVE DANCER, Columbia) Shorter, tenor sax, piano; Herbie Hancock, piano; David Amaro, acoustic guitar; Dave McDaniel, bass; Roberto Silva, drums; Airto, percussion; Wagner Tiso, organ.**

You know how they send stuff up in the Voyager to other planets? I would send Wayne Shorter's music up in the Voyager as a representative of the saxophone for the whole world. For me, he has the greatest sound on saxophone. There are players that have a Coltrane-esque sound, a Michael Brecker-ish sound, but nobody can touch Wayne Shorter when it comes to sound and approach. And as a composer, he's so underrated. I listen to this more than Weather Report. Critics say that his music is too composed and there's not enough flying. You know, a lot of the composition is from his soloing, and if you really listen to the music you can hear it's one and the same. There aren't enough stars. And the way that he embraces modern music and retains a sense of Wayne Shorter, he has the ability to mold his compositions and his sound to what is happening today. **DB**